

FROM · SUNSET · RIDGE
POEMS · OLD · AND · NEW



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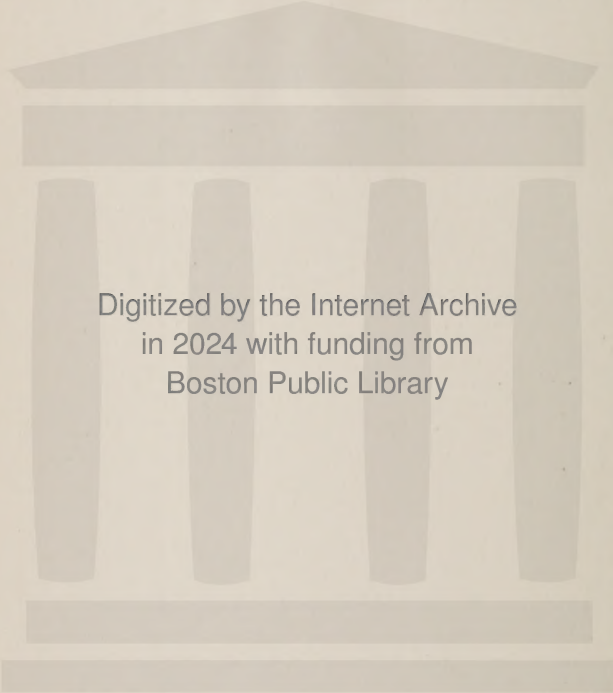


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FROM SUNSET RIDGE

POEMS OLD AND NEW

BY

JULIA WARD HOWE



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

The Riverside Press, Cambridge

1898

Dup. 2405.45 =* P. 85.431. 3

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THE WORD

*Had I one of thy words, my Master,
With a spirit and tone of thine,
I would run to the farthest Indies
To scatter the joy divine.*

*I would waken the frozen ocean
With a billowy burst of joy :
Stir the ships at their grim ice-moorings
The summer passes by.*

*I would enter court and hovel,
Forgetful of mien or dress,
With a treasure that all should ask for;
An errand that all should bless.*

*I seek for thy words, my Master,
With a spelling vexed and slow :
With scanty illuminations
In an alphabet of woe.*

*But while I am searching, scanning
A lesson none ask to hear,
My life writeth out thy sentence
Divinely just and dear.*

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FROM SUNSET RIDGE

BATTLE-HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

MINE eyes have seen the glory of the coming of
the Lord:

He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes
of wrath are stored ;

He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible
swift sword :

His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred
circling camps ;

They have builded Him an altar in the evening
dews and damps ;

I can read his righteous sentence by the dim and
flaring lamps.

His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished rows
of steel :

“ As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my
grace shall deal ;

2 BATTLE-HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent
with his heel,

Since God is marching on."

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never
call retreat ;

He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment-seat :

Oh ! be swift, my soul, to answer Him ! be jubilant,
my feet !

Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across
the sea,

With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and
me :

As he died to make men holy, let us die to make
men free,

While God is marching on.

OUR COUNTRY

ON primal rocks she wrote her name,
Her towers were reared on holy graves,
The golden seed that bore her came
Swift-winged with prayer o'er ocean waves.

The Forest bowed his solemn crest,
And open flung his sylvan doors ;
Meek Rivers led the appointed Guest
To clasp the wide-embracing shores ;

Till, fold by fold, the broidered Land
To swell her virgin vestments grew,
While Sages, strong in heart and hand,
Her virtue's fiery girdle drew.

O Exile of the wrath of Kings !
O Pilgrim Ark of Liberty !
The refuge of divinest things,
Their record must abide in thee.

First in the glories of thy front
Let the crown jewel Truth be found ;

Thy right hand fling with generous wont
Love's happy chain to furthest bound.

Let Justice with the faultless scales
Hold fast the worship of thy sons,
Thy commerce spread her shining sails
Where no dark tide of rapine runs.

So link thy ways to those of God,
So follow firm the heavenly laws,
That stars may greet thee, warrior-browed,
And storm-spiced angels hail thy cause.

O Land, the measure of our prayers,
Hope of the world, in grief and wrong!
Be thine the blessing of the years,
The gift of faith, the crown of song.

OUR ORDERS

WEAVE no more silks, ye Lyons looms,
To deck our girls for gay delights !
The crimson flower of battle blooms,
And solemn marches fill the nights.

Weave but the flag whose bars to-day
Drooped heavy o'er our early dead,
And homely garments, coarse and gray,
For orphans that must earn their bread !

Keep back your tunes, ye viols sweet,
That poured delight from other lands !
Rouse there the dancers' restless feet :
The trumpet leads our warrior bands.

And ye that wage the war of words
With mystic fame and subtle power,
Go, chatter to the idle birds,
Or teach the lesson of the hour !

Ye Sibyl Arts, in one stern knot
Be all your offices combined !

Stand close, while Courage draws the lot,
The destiny of human kind.

And if that destiny could fail,
The sun should darken in the sky,
The eternal bloom of Nature pale,
And God, and Truth, and Freedom die !

THE FLAG

THERE 's a flag hangs over my threshold, whose
folds are more dear to me
Than the blood that thrills in my bosom its earnest
of liberty ;
And dear are the stars it harbors in its sunny field
of blue
As the hope of a further heaven, that lights all our
dim lives through.

But now should my guests be merry, the house is in
holiday guise,
Looking out through its burnished windows like a
score of welcoming eyes.
Come hither, my brothers, who wander in saintli-
ness or in sin ;
Come hither, ye pilgrims of Nature, my heart doth
invite you in.

My wine is not of the choicest, yet bears it an hon-
est brand ;
And the bread that I bid you lighten, I break with
no sparing hand :

But pause, ere ye pass to taste it, one act must accomplished be, —
Salute the flag in its virtue, before ye sit down with me.

The flag of our stately battles, not struggles of
wrath and greed,
Its stripes were a holy lesson, its spangles a death-
less creed :
'T was red with the blood of freemen, and white
with the fear of the foe ;
And the stars that fight in their courses 'gainst tyr-
rants its symbols know.

Come hither, thou son of my mother ; we were
reared in the self-same arms ;
Thou hast many a pleasant gesture, thy mind hath
its gifts and charms ;
But my heart is as stern to question as mine eyes
are of sorrows full :
Salute the flag in its virtue, or pass on where others
rule !

Thou lord of a thousand acres, with heaps of un-
counted gold,
The steeds of thy stall are haughty, thy lackeys
cunning and bold :

I envy no jot of thy splendor, I rail at thy follies
none, —

Salute the flag in its virtue, or leave my poor house
alone !

Fair lady with silken flouncings, high waving thy
stainless plume,

We welcome thee to our banquet, a flower of cost-
liest bloom.

Let an hundred maids live widowed to furnish thy
bridal bed ;

But pause where the flag doth question, and bend
thy triumphant head.

Take down now your flaunting banner ; for a scout
comes breathless and pale,

With the terror of death upon him ; of failure is all
his tale :

“ They have fled while the flag waved o’er them,
they ’ve turned to the foe their back ;

They are scattered, pursued, and slaughtered ; the
fields are all rout and wrack.”

Pass hence then, the friends I gathered, a goodly
company,

All ye that have manhood in you, go, perish for
Liberty !

But I and the babes God gave me will wait with
 uplifted hearts,
With the firm smile ready to kindle, and the will to
 perform our parts.

When the last true heart lies bloodless, when the
 fierce and the false have won,
I 'll press in turn to my bosom each daughter and
 either son :
Bid them loose the flag from its bearings, and we 'll
 lay us down to rest
With the glory of home about us, and its freedom
 locked in our breast.

THE BATTLE-EUCHARIST

ABOVE the seas of gold and glass
The Christ, transfigured, stands to-day ;
Below, in troubled currents, pass
The tidal fates of man away.

Through that environed blessedness
Our sorrow cannot wholly rise,
Nor his swift sympathy redress
The anguish that in Nature lies.

Yet mindful from his banquet sends
The guest of God a cup of wine,
And shares a morsel with his friends,
Who, wondering, wait without the shrine.

.

Remain with us, O Lord ! remain ;
Our faint souls will not let thee go :
Bear with us this surpassing pain,
Abide our sacrament of woe,

While ghostly hands from battle-fields
Reproach with succor long delayed,

And all the wealth our treasure yields
Buys not the power to hasten aid.

O Christ, that multipliest bread !
Thou Feeder of the multitude,
On them thy heart's redemption shed,
Feed our beloved with heavenly food ;

And open wide the gates of thought,
That, sitting at this feast divine,
Our faith may see deliverance wrought
By pangs that bear the mark of thine.

THE NEW EXODUS

“FORSAKE this flowery garden !” the frowning An-
gel said ;

“Its vines no more may feed thee, compel from
stones thy bread ;

Pursue the veins deep buried that hide thy wine
and oil :

Fruit shalt thou find with sorrow, and children rear
in toil.”

Oh ! not in heathen vengeance the winged apostle
spoke,

Nor savage retribution the blooming fetters broke.

Man had an arm for labor, a strength to conquer
pain,

A brain to plot and study, a will to serve and reign.

That will with slow arraying confronts itself with
fate,

The pair unconscious twining the arches of the
State.

Earth keeps her fairest garlands to crown the tire-
less spade ;

The fields are white with harvest, the hireling’s fee
is paid.

From tented field to city, to palace, and to throne,
Man builds with work his kingdom, and makes the
world his own.

All welded with conditions is empire's golden
ring :

The king must keep the peasant, the peasant feed
the king.

The word of God once spoken, from truth is never
lost ;

The high command once given, earth guards with
jealous cost.

By this perplexing lesson, men build their busy
schemes :

"The way of comfort lies not, kind Eden, through
thy dreams."

I see a land before me, where manhood in its pride
Forgot the solemn sentence, the wage of toil de-
nied :

"To wealth and lofty station some royal road must
be ;

Our brother, bound and plundered, shall earn us
luxury.

"One half of knowledge give him for service and
for skill,

The nobler half withholding, that moulds the manly
will :

From justice bar his pleadings, from mercy keep
his prayers ;
His daughters for our pleasure, his sons to serve
our heirs."

Again the frowning Angel commandeth to depart,
With fiery scourge of terror, with want and woe of
heart :

"Go forth ! the earth is weary to bear unrighteous
feet ;
Release your false possession ; go, work that ye
may eat.

"Bring here the light of knowledge, the scale of
equal rule ;
Bring the Republic's weapons, the forum and the
school :
The Dagon of your worship is broken on his shrine ;
The palm of Christian mercy brings in the true di-
vine."

So from your southern Eden the flaming sword
doth drive ;
Your lesson is appointed ; go, learn how workmen
thrive !
Not sloth has fee of plenty, nor pride of stately
crest ;
But thou of God beloved, O Labor crowned with
rest !

PARRICIDE

ABRAHAM LINCOLN — APRIL 14, 1865

O'ER the warrior gauntlet grim
Late the silken glove we drew,
Bade the watch-fires slacken dim
In the dawn's auspicious hue.
 Stayed the armèd heel ;
 Still the clanging steel ;
Joys unwonted thrilled the silence through.

Glad drew near the Easter tide ;
And the thoughts of men anew
Turned to Him who spotless died
For the peace that none shall rue.
 Out of mortal pain
 This abiding strain
Issued : " Peace, my peace, I give to you."

Musing o'er the silent strings,
By their apathy opprest,
Waiting for the spirit-wings,
To be touched and soul-possessed,
 "I am dull," I said :
 " Treason is not dead ;
Still in ambush lurks that shivering guest."

Then a woman's shriek of fear
Smote us in its arrowy flight ;
And a wonder wild and drear
Did the hearts of men unite.

Has the seed of crime
Reached its flowering-time,
That it shoots to this audacious height ?

Then, as frosts the landscape change,
Stiffening from the summer's glow,
Grew the jocund faces strange,
Lay the loftiest emblem low :
Kings are of the past,
Suffered still to last ;
These twin crowns the present did bestow.

Fair assassin, murder white,
With thy serpent speed avoid
Each unsullied household light,
Every conscience unalloyed.
Neither heart nor home
Where good angels come
Suffer thee in nearness to abide.

Slanderer of the gracious brow,
The untiring blood of youth,
Servant of an evil vow,
Of a crime that beggars ruth,

Treason was thy dam,
Wolfling, when the Lamb,
The Anointed, met thy venom'd tooth.

With the righteous did he fall,
With the sainted doth he lie ;
While the gibbet's vultures call
Thee, that, 'twixt the earth and sky,
Disavowed of both
In their Godward troth,
Thou mayst make thy poor amend, and die.

If it were my latest breath,
Doomed his bloody end to share,
I would brand thee with his death
As a deed beyond despair.
Since the Christ was lost
For a felon's cost,
None like thee of vengeance should beware.

Leave the murderer, noble song,
Helpless in the toils of fate :
To the just thy meeds belong,
To the martyr, to the state.
When the storm beats loud
Over sail and shroud,
Tunefully the seaman cheers his mate.

Never tempest lashed the wave
But to leave it fresher calm ;

Never weapon scarred the brave
But their blood did purchase balm.
 God hath writ on high
 Such a victory
As uplifts the nation with its psalm.

Honor to the heart of love,
Honor to the peaceful will,
Slow to threaten, strong to move,
Swift to render good for ill !
 Glory crowns his end,
 And the captive's friend
From his ashes makes us freemen still.

PARDON

WILKES BOOTH — APRIL 26, 1865

PAINS the sharp sentence the heart in whose wrath
it was uttered,
Now thou art cold ;
Vengeance, the headlong, and Justice, with purpose
close muttered,
Loosen their hold.

Death brings atonement ; he did that whereof ye
accuse him, —
Murder accurst ;
But, from that crisis of crime in which Satan did
lose him,
Suffered the worst.

Harshly the red dawn arose on a deed of his doing,
Never to mend ;
But harsher days he wore out in the bitter pursuing
And the wild end.

So lift the pale flag of truce, wrap those mysteries
round him,
In whose avail

Madness that moved, and the swift retribution that
found him,
Falter and fail.

So the soft purples that quiet the heavens with
mourning,
Willing to fall,
Lend him one fold, his illustrious victim adorning
With wider pall.

Back to the cross, where the Saviour uplifted in
dying
Bade all souls live,
Turns the reft bosom of Nature, his mother, low
sighing,
Greatest, forgive !

THE TELEGRAMS

BRING the hearse to the station,
When one shall demand it, late ;
For that dark consummation
The traveler must not wait.
Men say not by what connivance
He slid from his weight of woe,
Whether sickness or weak contrivance,
But we know him glad to go.
On and on and ever on !
What next ?

Nor let the priest be wanting
With his hollow eyes of prayer,
While the sexton wrenches, panting,
The stone from the dismal stair.
But call not the friends who left him
When fortune and pleasure fled :
Mortality hath not bereft him,
That they should confront him, dead.
On and on and ever on !
What next ?

Bid my mother be ready :

We are coming home to-night :

Let my chamber be still and shady

With the softened nuptial light.

We have traveled so gayly, madly,

No shadow hath crossed our way ;

Yet we come back like children, gladly,

Joy-spent with our holiday.

On and on and ever on !

What next ?

Stop the train at the landing,

And search every carriage through ;

Let no one escape your handing,

None shiver, or shrink from view.

Three blood-stained guests expect him ;

Three murders oppress his soul ;

Be strained every nerve to detect him

Who feasted, and killed, and stole.

On and on and ever on !

What next ?

Be rid of the notes they scattered ;

The great house is down at last ;

The image of gold is shattered,

And never can be recast.

The bankrupts show leaden features,

And weary, distracted looks,

While harpy-eyed, wolf-souled creatures
Pry through their dishonored books.
On and on and ever on !
What next ?

Let him hasten, lest worse befall him,
To look on me, ere I die :
I will whisper one curse to appall him,
Ere the black flood carry me by.
His bridal ? The friends forbid it ;
I have shown them his proofs of guilt ;
Let him hear, with my laugh, who did it ;
Then hurry, Death, as thou wilt !
On and on and ever on !
What next ?

Thus the living and dying daily
Flash forward their wants and words,
While still on Thought's slender railway
Sit scathless the little birds :
They heed not the sentence dire
By magical hands exprest,
And only the sun's warm fire
Stirs softly their happy breast.
On and on and ever on !
God next !

THE WEDDING

IN her satin gown so fine
Trips the bride within the shrine.
Waits the street to see her pass,
Like a vision in a glass.
Roses crown her peerless head :
Keep your lilies for the dead !

Something of the light without
Enters with her, veiled about ;
Sunbeams, hiding in her hair,
Please themselves with silken wear ;
Shadows point to what shall be
In the dim futurity.

Wreathe with flowers the weighty yoke
Might of mortal never broke.
From the altar of her vows
To the grave's unsightly house
Measured is the path, and made :
All the work is planned and paid.

As a girl, with ready smile,
Where shall rise some ponderous pile,

On the chosen, festal day,
Turns the initial sod away,
So the bride with fingers frail
Founds a temple or a jail, —

Or a palace, it may be,
Flooded full with luxury,
Open yet to deadliest things,
And the Midnight Angel's wings.
Keep its chambers purged with prayer :
Faith can guard it, Love is rare.

Organ, sound thy wedding-tunes !
Priest, recite the sacred runes !
Hast no ghostly help nor art
Can enrich a selfish heart,
Blessing bind 'twixt greed and gold,
Joy with bloom for bargain sold ?

Hail, the wedded task of life !
Mending husband, moulding wife.
Hope brings labor, labor peace ;
Wisdom ripens, goods increase ;
Triumph crowns the sainted head,
And our lilies wait the dead.

THE FUNERAL

As I passed down the street,
Sighing and singing,
Making its pavement sweet
With flowery flinging,
Came the unwelcome feet,
Sad burthen bringing.

Death ! I forgot thou shouldst
Harvest this morning :
Not for thy festival
Was my adorning ;
Yet to my heart I take,
Duteous, thy warning.

Out of the pleasant day
Darkly they lay thee :
Shall thine accustomed haunts
No more display thee ;
Shall thy high house of life
Cease to obey thee.

Done are thy deeds of good,
And thy malefeasance ;

THE FUNERAL

Ended the years of dole,
And the short pleasance :
Thou art a power no more,
Only a presence.

Hot tears bedim the eyes
That would behold thee ;
Death-spasms wring the hearts
Whose loves infold thee ;
While monumental Grief
Waits to inmould thee.

Whither, ah ! whither gone,
From our wild weeping ?
For what new threshing-floor
Bound with strange reaping ?
Taken, we know no more,
Into God's keeping.

THE CHARITABLE VISITOR

SHE carries no flag of fashion, her clothes are but
passing plain,
Though she comes from a city palace all jubilant
with her reign :
She threads a bewildering alley, with ashes and
dust thrown out,
And fighting and cursing children, who mock as she
moves about.

Why walk you this way, my lady, in the snow and
slippery ice ?
These are not the shrines of virtue, — here misery
lives, and vice :
Rum helps the heart of starvation to a courage bold
and bad ;
And women are loud and brawling, while men sit
maudlin and mad.

I see in the corner yonder the boy with a broken
arm,
And the mother whose blind wrath did it, — strange
guardian from childish harm !

That face will grow bright at your coming, but your
steward might come as well,
Or better the Sunday teacher that helped him to
read and spell.

Oh ! I do not come of my willing, with froward and
restless feet :
I have pleasant tasks in my chamber, and friends
well-beloved to greet.
To follow the dear Lord Jesus, I walk in the storm
and snow ;
Where I find the trace of his footsteps, there lilies
and roses grow.

He said that to give was blessèd, more blessèd than
to receive ;
But what could he take, dear angels, of all that we
had to give,
Save a little pause of attention, and a little thrill of
delight,
When the dead were waked from their slumbers,
and the blind recalled to sight ?

Say, the King came forth with the morning, and
opened his palace doors,
Thence flinging his gifts like sunbeams that break
upon marble floors ;
But the wind with wild pinions caught them, and
carried them round about :

Though I looked till mine eyes were dazzled, I
never could make them out.

But he bade me go far and find them, "go seek
them with zeal and pain :

The hand is most welcome to me that brings me
mine own again ;

And those who follow them furthest, with faithful
searching and sight,

Are brought with joy to my presence, and sit at my
feet all night."

So, hither and thither walking, I gather them
broadly cast ;

Where yonder young face doth sicken, it may be
the best and last.

In no void or vague of duty I come to his aid to-
day :

I bring God's love to his bedside, and carry God's
gift away.

THE FINE LADY

HER heart is set on folly,
An amber gathering straws :
She courts each poor occurrence,
Heeds not the heavenly laws.
Pity her !

She has a little beauty,
And she flaunts it in the day,
While the selfish wrinkles, spreading,
Steal all its charm away.
Pity her !

She has a little money,
And she flings it everywhere :
'T is a gewgaw on her bosom,
A tinsel in her hair.
Pity her !

She has a little feeling,
She spreads a foolish net
That snares her own weak footsteps,
Not his for whom 't is set.
Pity her !

Ye harmless household drudges,
Your draggled daily wear
And horny palms of labor
A softer heart may bear.
Pity her !

Ye steadfast ones, whose burthens
Weigh valorous shoulders down,
With hands that cannot idle,
And brows that will not frown,
Pity her !

Ye saints, whose thoughts are folded
As graciously to rest
As a dove's stainless pinions
Upon her guileless breast,
Pity her !

But most, ye helpful angels
That send distress and work,
Hot task and sweating forehead,
To heal man's idle irk,
Pity her !

HER VERSES : A LYRICAL ROMANCE

I

THE LEGACY

HER verses, — where she lies
The tall trees bend and whisper ;
Soft voices from the skies
Recall the tuneful lisper :
The sunny nooks she loved,
Her flower-beds untended,
Afflict us with neglect,
Like fair things ill-befriended.

Yet 't is so merciful
That Time wipes out our traces,
And that the thick-set moss
Grows o'er our darkened faces,
Till but some faithful heart
Our faded traits comprises,
And sorrow, dead in earth,
In harmless beauty rises.

She had a guileless heart,
And Life was rude to grieve it ;

She had a soul of fire,
 And Heaven is kind to shrive it :
 The years are past that said,
 " Keep long this seal unbroken ;
 But, when my name 's forgot,
 Then let my words be spoken."

So, standing at her grave,
 With trembling hands I gather
 The blossoms of her life,
 Bedimmed with rust and weather.
 O World ! while thus I wave
 Her dead hand's blessing o'er thee,
 Think 't is my other self
 Whose heart lies bare before thee.

II

BLUSHES

I CANNOT make him know my love ;
 Nor from myself conceal
 The pangs that rankle in my breast,
 Sharper than flame or steel.

Could I but reach a hand to him,
 My very finger's thrill
 Would close, like tendrils, round the strength
 Of his belovèd will.

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Could I but lift mine eyes to his,
My glowing soul, unrolled,
Would flash like sunset on his sight,
In fiery red and gold.

Yet should fine spirits keep their bounds,
Nor rudely snatch at bliss :
The very sun would lose his light
In giving it amiss.

So, when I die, cross tenderly
My palms upon my breast,
And let some faithful hand compose
My tired limbs to rest.

But thou shalt fold this kerchief white,
And lay it on my face,
Saying, " She died of love untold ;
But she is dead in grace."

III

WISHES

I WOULD I might approach thee,
As the moon draws near the cloud,
With still and stately courtesy,
Clear-eyed and solemn-browed ;
But, when their meeting comes, her face
In his deep breast doth hide,

The heavens are still, in solemn joy,
The world is glorified.

I would I might approach thee,
As music, swift afloat,
Surprises, with its sudden joy,
A wanderer in a boat :
The sordid walls of life fall down
Before that clarion clear ;
A passing rapture oft recalled
When days grow blank and drear.

I would I might approach thee,
As breezes fresh and pure,
Unsighted, breathe on fevered lips,
And throbbing temples cure ;
As Joy and Love, and healthful Hope,
Visit some chosen heart,
And enter, softly welcomed there,
And never more depart.

IV

FEARS

OH ! how shall I grow fair enough
For thee to look upon ?
I am but the poor shallow water
That glistens in the sun,

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That darkens, mean and beautiful,
When his brief glance moves on.

Oh ! what shall raise me to thy sphere ?
How shall my thoughts aspire ?
I am the string that warbles to
A poet's touch of fire :
He flings it by, — how dumb and low
Sinks the forgotten lyre !

Remember, then, my humble heart
That trembled with surprise ;
Recall the faith that dared to meet
The question of thine eyes :
Shall these not make me dear to thee
Through Love's eternities ?

V

RESOLVES

You never knew how cruel kind
Was the caress you gave ;
You never meant to light a flame
Should smoulder in my grave.

From gentle studies, arts beloved,
My thoughts all fix on thee ;

And Peace dissolves before my sight,
And Duty cannot be.

Oh ! speak one word so kindly rude,
So greatly stern and true,
That I may kiss thy feet for shame,
And rise, absolved and new.

Then with some song of noblest worth
I'll pay this truant rhyme,
And stretch my stolen broidery to
The boundless tasks of Time.

VI

LATIN

HERE amid shadows, lovingly embracing,
Dropt from above by apple-trees unfruitful,
With a chance scholar, caught and held to help
me,
Read I in Horace ;

Lost in the figures, lawless in the metrum,
Piecing the classic phrase with homespun English,
Bridging doubtful meanings with such daring fic-
tions
As move his wonder.

Dust lay condensed on the covers lexiconic, —
 Tacitus above stairs, quasi sub-neglected,
 Very little progress since I saw your godship,
 Day to be remembered !

Avè, sweet Horace, all thy wonder graces
 (Soul of perfection, with a change of rainbows)
 Less must delight me than thy fervent nature,
 Foremost in friendship.

“ We with one bound will pursue the silent journey :
 Ibimus, ibimus, — let one urn contain us ! ”
 Which would survive, to choke Love’s glowing em-
 bers
 With Life’s gray ashes ?

Happy thy Mæcenæ ! happier thou to praise him,
 Twining thy best beauties round the brow thou
 lovest :
 Oh ! to nobly name whom the deep heart doth
 worship
 Is a boon most holy.

Yonder by the high-road, from the post-town lead-
 ing,
 Doth at times appear a worn and dusty carriage :
 Two white bony horses, rudely loricated,
 Drag it behind them.

In the carriage mostly come my born relations,
Very keen to see me in the rural season ;
Board and bedding gratis, compliments at parting :
 " Come again next summer."

Oh ! if one I knew of hastened down the high-road,
Like a heaven-sent angel, present to petition,
Would I sit searching thy disjointed meanings,
 Horace the Dainty ?

Should I not then fling far the well-bound volume,
Decent in sheep-skins thou wert never blest with ?
For this heart of mine, high leaping, wild rejoicing,
 Then would be the poet.

VII

A DREAM

A WOMAN came, wearing a veil ;
Her features are burning and pale ;
At the door of the shrine doth she kneel,
And waileth out, bowing her head,
" Ye men of remembrance and dread,
Exorcise the pangs that I feel.

A boat that is torn with the tide,
A mountain with flame in its side
That rends its devouring way,

A feather the whirlwind lifts high,
 Are not wilder or weaker than I,
 Since Love makes my bosom his prey.

Ye Saints, I fall down at your feet ;
 Thou Virgin, so piteous to greet,
 Reach hither the calm of your hands ;
 Ye statues of power and of art,
 Let your marble weight lie on my heart,
 Hold my madness with merciful bands."

The priest takes his candle and book
 With the pity of scorn in his look,
 And chants the dull Mass through his teeth ;
 But the penitent, clasping his knees,
 Cries, " Vain as the sough of the breeze
 Are thy words to the anguish of death."

The priest, with reproof and frown,
 Bids the listless attendant reach down
 The water that sprinkles from sin.
 " Your water is water," she cries :
 " The further its foolishness flies,
 The fiercer the flames burn within."

" Get thee hence to the cell and the scourge ! "
 The priest in his anger doth urge,
 " Or the fire of the stake thou shalt prove,

Maintaining with blasphemous tongue
That the mass-book and censer, high swung,
Cannot cast out the demon of Love."

Then the Highest stepped down from his place,
While the depths of his wonderful face
The thrill of compassion did move :
"Come, hide thee," he cried, "on this breast ;
I summon the weary to rest ;
With love I exorcise thy love."

VIII

WAKING

SOFT as the touch of twilight that restores
The hard-bound earth from summer sweat and
 strain,
This dream of morning soothed my fevered soul,
And gave me to my gentleness again.

So, bathed in pearly sweets, I oped mine eyes,
And saw the beauty that the morning paints,
And saw the shadows strengthen in the sun
With the calm willingness of dying saints.

Oh ! had I then to passion died, such peace
Had filled my parting as transfigures Death ;
But thou didst turn me backward with a word,
And Love celestial fled Love's human breath.

IX

THE SUMMONS

I EXPECT you in September
With the glory of the year :
You shall make the Autumn precious,
And the death of Summer dear ;
You shall help the days that shorten,
With a lengthening of delight ;
You shall whisper long-drawn blisses
Through the gathering screen of night.

I will lead you, dream-enchanted,
Where the fairest grasses grow ;
I will hear your murmured music
Where the fresh winds pipe and blow.
On the brown heath, weird-encircled,
Shall our noiseless footsteps fall, —
We, communing with twin counsel,
Each to other all in all.

Leave the titles that men owe thee ;
Like the first pair let us meet ;
Name the world all over to me,
New-created at thy feet ;
Gentle task and duteous learning,
I will hang upon thy breath
With the tender zeal of childhood,
With the constancy of death.

What shall be the gods declare not, —
 They who stamp Love's burning coin
 Into spangles of a moment,
 Into stars that deathless shine.
 Oh ! the foolish music lingers ;
 For the theme is heavenly dear :
 I expect you in September,
 With the glories of the year.

X

WAITING

I HAVE set my house in order
 For a stately step to grace ;
 I have bidden the mirrors keep record
 Of a never-forgotten face ;
 I have brightened with thrifty cunning
 The walls of my sylvan home :
 They are beautiful in the shadow
 Of him who vouchsafes to come.

I have swept the leaves from the greensward,
 And the gray stones twinkle and shine ;
 I have loosened each fretful tangle
 Of the twisted cedar and vine ;
 I have ordered the waters waste not
 Their splendors upon mine eye,
 But to wait, like my heart, for thy footsteps,
 And gush when thou drawest nigh.

Myself I would dress for thy presence ;
 But there I must stand and weep,
 Since the years that teach Love's value
 His vanishing treasure sweep.
 But words that are spells of magic,
 And merciful looks and ways,
 Shall brighten the rusted features
 That faded when none did praise.

Thou gracious and lordly creature,
 Do the trees, when thou passest by,
 Let down their fair arms to enlace thee,
 And the flowers reach up to thine eye ?
 Do they wait, all athrill, when thou passest,
 For a touch of thy life divine ?
 Do they fold their meek hands when thou fleetest,
 And die for a breath of thine ?

My heart has leapt forth to embrace thee ;
 It clings, like a babe, to thy breast ;
 And my blood is a storm-stirred ocean
 That waits for the word of rest.
 Time loses his paltry measure
 Now that Love's eterne draws near,
 And the lingering moments that part us
 Are endless in hope and fear.

Oh ! what if, beyond thy sunshine,
 Some gathering storm should brood ?

Thy rapture, forsaking, shall leave me
 Alone with God's orphanhood.
 The heart thou hast blest so inly
 Shall wait no inglorious breath :
 Come hither, then, ye who walk twinly ;
 So enter here, Love and Death !

XI

THE END

DEATH entered where Love was waiting
 With the frosted lily-crown, —
 Pale pontiff, shadow-mating,
 Waving the life-flame down.

His slaves, with robes of whiteness,
 Shrouded the glowing face :
 Gone is the vision of brightness,
 A ghost is in its place.

They bore her with solemn knelling,
 By saintly crypt and nave,
 To her new-appointed dwelling, —
 The cloisters of the grave.

There, 'mong the silent sisters,
 She tarries, with folded palms :
 Where the passing torch-light glisters,
 They answer in whispered psalms.

But as one the convent hideth,
At the festivals of God,
From the covert where she bideth,
Sends holy song abroad ;

So she, whom then we buried
With manifold sob and strain,
Sends back her song, love-varied,
To waken our joy again, —

Sends back the flame of fervor
That warms not her frozen breast,
To guide Love's true deserver
To her place in the fields of rest.

LITTLE ONE

My dearest boy, my sweetest !
For paradise the meetest ;
The child that never grieves me,
The love that never leaves me ;
The lamb by J^{ésu} tended ;
The shadow, star befriended ;
In winter's woe and straining,
The blossom still remaining.

Days must not find me sitting
Where shadows dim are flitting
Across the grassy measure
That hides my buried treasure,
Nor bent with tears and sighing
More prone than thy down-lying :
I have a freight to carry,
A goal, — I must not tarry.

If men would garlands give me,
If steadfast hearts receive me,
Their homage I 'd surrender
For one embrace most tender ;

One kiss, with sorrow in it,
To hold thee but one minute,
One word, our tie recalling,
Beyond the gulf appalling.

Since God's device doth take thee,
My fretting should forsake thee ;
For many a mother borrows
Her comfort from the sorrows
Her vanished darling misses,
Transferred to heavenly blisses.
But I must ever miss thee,
Must ever call and kiss thee,
With thy sweet phantom near me,
And only God to hear me.

The pomp with which I mourn thee,
I who have proudly borne thee,
Is not of weary sables,
Nor unsubstantial fables ;
While thou, in white apparel,
And crowned, above my laurel,
Passest from my discerning
To more transcendent learning.

When thou wert taken from me,
Did better art become me,
And painful satisfaction
Wrung from some noblest action.

I mourn in simpler praying,
More work and less delaying,
In hope enforced that mellows
The crudeness of thy fellows,
Who, past thy lovely season,
Attempt the wars of Reason ;
I mourn thee with endeavor
That loves and grieves forever.

THE LAMB WITHOUT THE FOLD

WHENE'ER I close the door at night,
And turn the creaking key about,
A pang renewed assails my heart —
I think, my darling is shut out.

Think that, beneath these starry skies,
He wanders, with his little feet ;
The pines stand, hushed in glad surprise,
The garden yields its tribute sweet.

Thro' every well-known path and nook
I see his angel footsteps glide,
As guileless as the Pascal Lamb
That kept the infant Saviour's side.

His earnest eye, perhaps, can pierce
The gloom in which his parents sit ;
He wonders what has changed the house,
And why the cloud hangs over it.

He passes with a pensive smile —
Why do they linger to grow old,
And what the burthen on their hearts ?
On *him* shall sorrow have no hold.

Within the darkened porch I stand —
Scarce knowing why, I linger long ;
Oh ! could I call thee back to me,
Bright bird of heaven, with sooth or song !

But no — the wayworn wretch shall pause
To bless the shelter of this door ;
Kinsman and guest shall enter in,
But my lost darling never more.

Yet, waiting on his gentle ghost,
From sorrow's void, so deep and dull,
Comes a faint breathing of delight,
A presence calm and beautiful.

I have him, not in outstretched arms,
I hold him, not with straining sight,
While in blue depths of quietude
Drops, like a star, my still " Good-night."

Thus, nightly, do I bow my head
To the Unseen, Eternal force ;
Asking sweet pardon of my child
For yielding him in Death's divorce.

He turned away from childish plays,
His baby toys he held in scorn ;
He loved the forms of thought divine,
Woods, flowers, and fields of waving corn.

54 THE LAMB WITHOUT THE FOLD

And then I knew, my little one
Should by no vulgar love be taught,
But by the symbols God has given
To solemnize our common thought ;

The mystic angles, three in one,
The circling serpent's faultless round,
And, in far glory dim, the Cross,
Where Love o'erleaps the human bound.

STANZAS

OF the heaven is generation :
Fruition in the deep earth lies :
And where the twain have broadest blending,
The stateliest growths of life arise.

Set, then, thy root in earth more firmly :
Raise thy fair head erect and free :
And spread thy loving arms so widely,
That heaven and earth shall meet in thee.

THE SMOOTH PORTRAIT

How lightly hast thou learned of human grief !
Thy flesh has 'scaped the sacrificial knife —
Men quote the pride of a too happy life
To set thy even virtues in relief.

The brow's serenity — the head thrown back
That the audacious eyes may smile to heaven ;
The mouth, with not one tender muscle riven
By the impatient torture of the rack ;

A joy self-continent, that overflows
The marble of the face, for beauty's sake ;
Heroic laughter, such as day might wake
In a god's heart, with rosy, ringing blows.

Oh ! happy soul — upon thy placid breast
The worn eye sinks, and has so much of calm,
While the clear voice is medicine and balm
To heal the aguish fever of unrest.

Yet there are closets of the inner shrine
Where we are bidden from the flowery day,
To stand and give the awful voices sway,
And, holding by God's hand, must part from thine.

THE ROUGH SKETCH

S. G. H.

A GREAT grieved heart, an iron will,
As fearless blood as ever ran ;
A form elate with nervous strength
And fibrous vigor, — all a man.

A gallant rein, a restless spur,
The hand to wield a biting scourge ;
Small patience for the tasks of time,
Unmeasured power to speed and urge.

He rides the errand of the hour,
But sends no herald on his ways ;
The world would thank the service done,
He cannot stay for gold or praise.

Not lavishly he casts abroad
The glances of an eye intense,
And, did he smile but once a year,
It were a Christmas recompense.

I thank a poet for his name,
The " Down of Darkness " this should be ;

A child, who knows no risk it runs,
Might stroke its roughness harmlessly.

One helpful gift the gods forgot,
Due to the man of lion mood ;
A woman's soul to match with his
In high resolve and hardihood.

BALAKLAVA

THEY gave the fatal order, Charge !
And so, the Light Brigade went down
Where bristling brows of cannon crown
The front of either marge.

Traced all in fire we saw our way,
And the black goal of death beyond —
It was no moment to despond,
To question or to pray.

Firm in the saddle, stout of heart,
With plume and sabre waving high,
With gathering stride and onward cry,
The band was swift to start.

They took the field with solemn eye,
However wild the deed they knew,
However whoso bade, should rue,
Their business was, to die.

'T was the old gallant English blood,
And many a shadowy ancestor,
Guarding his sculptured arms afar,
That day in memory stood.

At serried gallop on they press,
Swerveless as penciled lines of light,
And where a steed turns back in fright,
That steed is riderless.

They charged in high, immortal ire !
The war-cloud swallowed them, the young,
The brave, — a handful widely flung,
But of heroic fire.

They fell, unconquered, nor in vain.
No, by the sacrificial cost
Of faith and courage, never lost,
Theirs doth the day remain.

Reft heart of love, contain thy wound !
Flash, eyes ! though lips press close and pale !
Still, mourners ! let us hear no wail
Above the trumpet's sound.

Nor wait the sire to weep the son
That bore his fortune and his pride,
Nor shall the mother's wish divide
From these, her cherished one.

But tearful England holds her breath,
Listening, uncomforted, their fame,
Who, in the greatness of her name,
Rode glorious unto death.

PIO NONO

THOU shouldst have had more faith ! thy hand did
shed

The seed of freedom in the field of God.
But the last peril drove thee from thy bounds,
And stranger feet the unripe harvest trod.

Thou shouldst have had more faith ! thy crown
was hung,

High-pitched, upon a sharp and thorny tree ;
We saw thee wrestle bravely with the boughs,
But the last buffet did dishearten thee.

Thou shouldst have had more faith ! the voice of
Christ

Called thee to meet him, walking on the wave ;
Thou shouldst have trod the waters as a path,
Such power divine thy holy mission gave.

Shoreward thy recreant footsteps turn, and sink :
In vain the heavenly voice, the outstretched arm,
Thou heed'st not, though a God doth beckon thee,
Binding the billows with a golden charm.

BEHIND THE VEIL

THE secret of man's life disclosed
Would cause him strange confusion,
Should God the cloud of fear remove,
Or veil of sweet illusion.

No maiden sees aright the faults
Or merits of her lover ;
No sick man guesses if 't were best
To die or to recover.

The miser dreams not that his wealth
Is dead as soon as buried ;
Nor knows the bard who sings away
Life's treasures, real and varied.

The tree-root lies too deep for sight,
The well-source for our plummet,
And heavenward fount and palm defy
Our scanning of their summit.

Whether a present grief ye weep,
Or yet untasted blisses,
Look for the balm that comes with tears,
The bane that lurks in kisses.

We may reap dear delight from wrongs,
Regret from things most pleasant ;
Foes may confess us when we 're gone,
And friends deny us present.

And that high suffering which we dread
A higher joy discloses ;
Men saw the thorns on Jesu's brow,
But angels saw the roses.

PRIVATION

OF all the workings of the Law Divine,
Privation is most wearily outworn ;
Harder than wounds that bleed, or pangs that tear,
'T is Life's high treason — generous Hope for-
sworn.

In want is woe and sad vacuity,
'T is Aspiration doubting of its crown ;
Yet who that ever panted in th' ascent
Would sit to rest, or turn to cast him down ?

To him who presses on, at each degree
New visions rise, beyond the dim unseen ;
Soon happier love, soon nearer hope shall come,
And only this slow suffering lies between.

Some men have wrung strange glory from the cloud
That was a prison to their loneliness ;
And, feeding other hearts with rare delight,
Kept for themselves their hunger and distress.

The blind majestic bard, whose tearless eyes
Were patient in the weariness of night ;

And one, his brother in a kindred art,
Bereft of melody, as he of light ;

Fruition was not for them to the sense —
The world for one, for one the swelling tone ;
“ We work — ” they said, and in high toil abode,
And “ we have wrought ! ” they uttered, and passed
on.

My Milton ! thou whose holy heart forbore
The doubtful rite of uncongenial shrines,
But gave the perfect tribute of its faith,
Before thee now the true Shekinah shines.

Seeking a nearer moral for my song,
I find two poets of the latter days,
Branded by Nature with the fatal gift,
Pilgrims from birth, but in divergent ways.

This rode his blood's high mettle to the full,
Goaded satiety with unblest wine ;
This to a meeker measure moved along,
Palm-heralded, as Christ in Palestine.

This, like a meteor, streamed abroad in air, —
This, like a star, abode in distant light ;
The one scared noonday with his crimson glare,
The other was the beacon-guide of night.

The one with lordly gesture trod the earth,
Gathering all pleasure, innocent or ill ;
The other bared his reverend brow to heav'n,
And gleaned from Nature with a sober will.

The one awoke the echoes of the Past,
Those sacred voices of the marble halls,
And bade them bear a demon-strophe wild
To mock, afar, his gray ancestral walls.

The other was penurious of his days
In those fair hills, beneath that friendly heaven ;
His were the deep, synthetic harmonies,
The joy of task and recompense God-given.

One in a wild convulsion ceased to be,
And if he went to bane or bliss, none knew ;
The other stood, serenely crowned with age,
And steadfast passed to God, if God be true.

Oh ! at the Muse-crowned temple of the one,
And at the other's lonely sepulchre,
Pause thou, my soul, and ponder deeply thence
The paths of Fate, and choosing, dare not err !

Hast thou the high, heroic heart to walk,
Or wait, receptive of the distant tone !
Or wouldst thou sit to revel, and crush out
Lifeblood of others, mingled with thine own ?

Wilt thou rest guardian of these simpler loves,
Leading the dull, the passionless, the weak ?
Or, desperate, rush to Lido's charmèd shore,
To fling wild kisses on a hireling's cheek ?

Oh ! treasured in the hand that cannot fail
Let thy poor life through want and waiting lie,
Radiant in anguish, comforted of tears,
If the deep voice but whisper : It is I.

PARABLES

I

" I SENT a child of mine to-day ;
I hope you used him well."

" Now, Lord, no visitor of yours
Has waited at my bell.

" The children of the Millionaire
Run up and down our street ;
I glory in their well-combed hair,
Their dress and trim complete.

" But yours would in a chariot come
With thoroughbreds so gay ;
And little merry maids and men
To cheer him on his way."

" Stood, then, no child before your door ? "
The Lord, persistent, said.

" Only a ragged beggar-boy,
With rough and frowzy head.

" The dirt was crusted on his skin,
His muddy feet were bare ;

The cook gave victuals from within ;
I cursed his coming there."

What sorrow, silvered with a smile,
Slides o'er the face divine ?
What tenderest whisper thrills rebuke ?
" The beggar-boy was mine ! "

II

Once, where men of high pretension
For the Lord did wait,
Suffer did their pride declension ;
Angry grew their state.

One, impatient, snaps his fingers ;
One torments his hair ;
One, albeit no pride of singers,
Hums a broken air.

Sitting low apart, a modest
Maiden waited too ;
Little weary one, thou ploddest
Ill thy week's work through !

Comes the Lord. From long abiding
They uprise in haste ;
With their greeting mingles chiding
For the time they waste.

“ Lord, I am a merchant wealthy ;
Commerce holds me dear ;
Competition enters stealthy
While I tarry here.”

“ Lord, for me recondite dinners
Chill on festive boards ;
Waste the games, and haste the winners,
While I wait thy words.”

To this folly of upbraiding
Says the Master, “ Yes :
You have waited too, my maiden ;
Seek you not redress ? ”

“ Waiting is such holy pleasure
For a joy most dear ;
I had rapture out of measure,
Knowing thou wert near.”

III

Beside this goodly mansion's gate
I 'll pause, and rest awhile :
Its master will not have me wait ;
He beckons with a smile.
“ Now, friend, what might your errand be ?
Will you walk in for charity ? ”

Thus I returned him : " Could you know
The treasures in my pack,
And all the bravery and show
I carry at my back,
The merchant's pains you should requite,
Not shame him with the beggar's mite."

" If it content you, open out
The goods you praise so well."
" I 've turned the rolling earth about
For that which here I sell ;
No trumpery for the servants' hall :
I only heed the master's call.

" Behold these painful broideries rare,
The costliest Fashion knows ;
Such as the chief Sultanas wear,
Steeped with the attar rose."
" Your shawl is faded, patched, and poor :
It pleases not ; show something more."

" This crystal phial, art-embossed,
A balsam doth contain
For whose delight an empire's cost
Were scarcely spent in vain."
" It cannot match one clover-bloom :
Bring other business, — pass perfume."

" Behold this weighty carcanet,
Whose links of sullen gold

Would seem to bind the Favorite yet
In Love's triumphant hold."

"The iron rusts through these gilded chains,
As smiles discover torture-pains."

"Last, then, this diamond, with a light
Kindled 'neath tropic skies :
A slave toiled twenty years of night,
Bleeding, to win this prize."

"One impulse of the blood you name
Would put your Kohinoor to shame."

"Shall your encounter make me poor,
And desolate of bread ?
If all my wealth beside your door
Buys not a pilgrim's bed,
At the next inn I'll set me down,
And travel to the market-town."

"Friend !" said the Master, "coming here,
You passed an unseen bound ;
And in the outer region drear
No hostelry is found.
I question all who pass this way,
And grant them leave to go or stay."

"But in my mansion, too, is wealth
Of garments glad and white :
My chains are helpful bonds of health ;
My jewels, heart's delight ;

My perfumes waste no joy divine :
Enter ; for all I have is thine."

IV

"Lord of life, why must thou seek me
In this desert wild ?
Why so tenderly bespeak me,
Fallen and sin-defiled ?

"Should thy feet, so fair and glorious,
That in heaven's ways go,
Tread the stony paths laborious
That the wicked know ?

"In abysses darkly yawning,
Where the lost are pent,
Shouldst thou spread the purple awning
Of thy sheltering tent ?

"See ! the hell-flames gather round thee,
Raging for thy life :
Tongues of thief and ribald wound thee
Worse than spear or knife.

"Oh ! of all my deeds abhorred
Is not this the worst,
Fronting thine anointed forehead
With this woe accurst ?" . . .

“ Angels, bear him without rudeness
To the breath of morn,
Veiling with your crowns the voidness
Where his brow is shorn.

“ Use no whisper of the evil
That his hand hath done,
Lest a saint become a devil
Torturing such an one.

“ And that wound, whose deadly feeling
Makes the bosom faint,
Reconcile with swift annealing,
Purge from mortal taint.

“ Call a feast of stately measure
With a solemn joy,
With all courtesy and pleasure
To him sitting by.

“ Gather up his long-lost kindred,
Angered and estranged ;
For each good gift bring an hundred,
Since his heart is changed.

“ Bind the robe upon his shoulder,
On his hand the ring ;
Since, while Love is treasure-holder,
Sorrow must be king.”

THE UNWELCOME MESSAGE

A DISMAL Postman passes by, —
I fear his sullen knock :
'T will strike a shiver through the door,
And paralyze the lock.

“ Plague not this unoffending house ;
It owes no shameful debt ;
Nor guilty chamber doth it hide
Where evil guests are met.

“ Here gentle heart and gentle blood
Their life-surroundings bless ;
And days glide by with happy toil,
And measured thankfulness.

“ The messengers who enter here
Are glad and bright of eye,
Freighted with precious words that stir
Responsive minstrelsy.”

“ The note is brief, the seal is sharp,
The characters are pale :

I cannot err in their address ;
My letters never fail.

If you the door will not unbar,
The window answers well,
Less lofty than the turret where
I touch the passing bell.

When you have read, the feast may speed,
The business, as you list :
But, somehow, where my foot has stept,
The joy of joys is missed ;

And on the heart of working week
A Sabbath falls of rest,
Unwished ; yet He who sends me here
Declares his errand blest."

TO THE CRITIC

OF all my verses, say that one is good,
So shalt thou give more praise than Hope might
claim ;

And from my poet-grave, to vex thy soul,
No ghost shall rise, whose deeds demand a name.

A thousand loves, and only one shall stand
To show us what its counterfeits should be ;
The blossoms of a spring-tide, and but one
Bears the world's fruit, — the seed of History.

A thousand rhymes shall pass, and only one
Show, crystal-shod, the Muse's twinkling feet ;
A thousand pearls the haughty Ethiop spurned
Ere one could make her luxury complete.

In goodliest palaces, some meanest room
The owner's smallness shields contentedly.
Nay, further : of the manifold we are,
But one pin's point shall pass eternity.

Exalt, then, to the greatness of the throne
One only of these beggarlings of mine ;
I with the rest will dwell in modest bounds :
The chosen one shall glorify the line.

PHILOSOPHY

NAKED and poor thou goest, Philosophy !
Thy robe of serge hath lain beneath the stars ;
Thy weight of tresses, ponderously free,
Of iron hue, no golden circlet bars.

Thy pale page, Study, by thy side doth hold,
As by Cyprigna's her persuasive boy :
Twin sacks thou bear'st ; one doth the gifts in-
fold,
In which thou tenderest immortal joy.

The other at thy patient back doth hang
To keep the boons thou 'rt wanted to receive :
Reproof therein doth hide her venom'd fang,
And hard barbaric arts, that mock and grieve.

Here is a stab, and here a mortal thrust ;
Here galley service brought the age to loss ;
Here lies thy virgin forehead rolled in dust
Beside the martyr stake or hero cross.

They who besmirched thy whiteness with their
pitch,
Thy gallery of glories did complete ;

They who accepted of thee so grew rich,
Men could not count their treasures in the street.

Thy hollow cheek, and eye of distant light,
Won from the chief of men their noblest love ;
Olympian feasts thy temperance requite,
And thy worn weeds a priceless dowry prove.

I know not if I 've caught the matchless mood
In which impassioned Petrarch sang of thee ;
But this I know, — the world its plenitude
May keep, so I may share thy beggary.

AMANDA'S INVENTORY

THIS is my hat : behold its upstart plume,
Soaring like pride, that even in heaven asks room !
This is my cloak of scarlet splendor rare,
A saucy challenge to the sunset glare.

Behold my coach of state and pony chaise,
A fairy pleasure for the summer days ;
The steeds that fly, like lightnings in a leash,
With their rude Jove, subservient to my wish.

Here are my jewels : each a fortune holds ;
A starving artist planned the graceful moulds :
Here hang my dresses in composed array,
A rainbow with a hue for every day.

These are my lovers, registered in date,
Who, with my dowry, seek myself to mate.
The haughtiest wooer wins me for his bride :
Who asks affection ? Pride should wed with pride.

These are my friends, who hourly come or send,
Pleased with my notice and a finger-end ;

Yonder 's my parson, proud to share my feast ;
My doctor 's there, a sycophantic beast.

This is my villa, where I take my ease
With flowers well-ordered, and ambitious trees ;
And this — what sudden spectre stays my breath ?
Amanda, poor Amanda ! this is death.

THE CHRIST

No idle superstition made him ;
Nor canst thou, Critic, him unmake ;
No sect upreared his holy stature,
Beloved for its divineness' sake.

Wipe rudely out the glowing picture ;
Leave but thy blank for man to read ;
Write nothingness where'er it please thee ;
Take, as I fling them, creed for creed :

What hast thou then ? thine own dominion,
The empire that thy nature craves ;
Crown thee a tyrant of opinion,
With disbelievers for thy slaves.

He grew not great by priestly cunning,
Nor magic gifts, nor Eastern arts :
Immortal love sprang up to honor
The fair ideal of our hearts.

As from some dreamer's inspiration
Each noble school of Science grew,

And rules that help the striving many
Were moulded from the gifted few ;

So, from his life and thoughts transcendent,
Flashed light that ages cannot dim :
Blind Faith and Feeling were before him ;
Religion followed after him.

THE CHURCH

I HEARD one say in sunny travel,
A braggart Frenchman, rude and vain,
He and his mates would mine St. Peter's,
And blast it with a powder-train.

I saw in thought the mighty ruin,
The wealth of Art and Record gone ;
The unfading pictures wrenched and shattered ;
The arches, music-knit, o'erthrown.

I thought how piteous Contadini
Would miss that genial mother-hearth ;
How, from the falling water-vases,
The marble doves would flutter forth.

Then, from the ghastly vision turning,
Mine eye the silly Celt did reach :
I said, and every heart responded,
“ Now, never more with me hold speech.”

So thou, whose ill-conditioned learning
Would shake the aisles where Faith abides ;

Where, from the vulgar world out-driven,
Devotion, crowned of ages, hides, —

Wield cautiously the crushing mallet :
Not Peter's door alone you break ;
But, of the temple of our sires,
A weltering heap of dust you make.

These aisles were built with holy living,
These stones were piled with thought and prayer :
The world before us gave the pattern,
The world that follows is the heir ;

And hearts are set, like gems incrustéd,
In the fair walls ; and, ruby-red,
The blood of martyrdom doth stain them,
And tears more terrible to shed.

So, build thy dome in airy heaven
A shelter for new hope and joy,
And write thereon the Master-sentence,
“ Come to deliver, not destroy.”

THE CRUCIFIX

IN desolations of my own
I see a figure lifted lone,
Stript, and extended felon-wise,
That yields not to the solvent skies.

Mother and friends are stolen away ;
Fails, too, the cordial light of day ;
And Darkness, and the deep Divine,
Their counsels mystical intwine.

The greatest distance cannot hide,
Nor Time, more potent to divide :
Touch but the golden bond of prayer,
He and his agony are there.

The Angel, with the nod of Fate,
Unsmiling and compassionate,
From Life's rude banquet beckoneth
To front us with that crownèd death.

So silent, yet he stirs our veins
To madden for heroic pains ;

So passive, turning human-kind,
Leagued with omnipotence of mind.

Uplifting all our weight of woe,
Bringing the vaulted heavens low,
Remembered as the immortal One
Who was, and willed to be, God's Son.

THE PRICE OF THE DIVINA COMMEDIA

GIVE, — you need not see the face,
But the garment hangeth bare ;
And the hand is gaunt and spare
That enforces Christian grace.

Many ages will not bring
Such a point as this to sight,
That the world should so requite
Master heart and matchless string.

Wonder at the well-born feet
Fretting in the flinty road.
Hath this virtue no abode ?
Hath this sorrow no retreat ?

See, beneath the hood of grief,
Muffled bays engird the brow.
Fame shall yield her topmost bough
Ere that laurel moult a leaf.

Give : it is no idle hand
That extends an asking palm,

Tracing yet the loftiest psalm
By the heart of Nature spanned.

In the antechamber long
Did he patient hearing crave :
Smiles and splendors crown the slave,
While the patriot suffers wrong.

Could the mighty audience deign,
Meeting once the inspired gaze,
They should ransom all their days
With the beauty of his strain.

With a spasm in his breast,
With a consummate love alone,
All his human blessings gone,
Doth he wander, void of rest.

Not a coin within his purse,
Not a crust to help his way,
Making yet a Judgment Day
With his power to bless and curse.

Give ; but ask what he has given :
That Posterity shall tell, —
All the majesty of Hell ;
Half the ecstasy of Heaven.

A NEW SCULPTOR

ONCE to my Fancy's hall a stranger came,
Of mien unwonted ;
And its pale shapes of glory without shame
Or speech confronted.

Fair was my hall, — a gallery of gods
Smoothly appointed,
With nymphs and satyrs from the dewy sods
Freshly anointed.

Great Jove sat throned in state, with Hermes near,
And fiery Bacchus,
Pallas and Pluto, and those Powers of fear
Whose visions rack us.

Artemis wore her crescent free of stars,
The hunt just scented ;
Glad Aphrodite met the warrior Mars,
The myriad-tented.

Rude was my visitant, of sturdy form,
Draped in such clothing

As the world's great, whom luxury makes warm,
Look on with loathing.

And yet methought his service-badge of soil
With honor wearing,
And in his dexter hand, embossed with toil,
A hammer bearing.

But while I waited till his eye should sink,
O'ercome with beauty,
With heart-impatience brimming to the brink
Of courteous duty,

He smote my marbles many a murderous blow,
His weapon poisoning ;
I, in my wrath and wonderment of woe,
No comment voicing.

"Come, sweep this rubbish from the workman's
way,
Wreck of past ages !
Afford me here a lump of harmless clay,
Ye grooms and pages !"

Then from that voidness of our mother-earth
A frame he builded,
Of a new feature, with the power of birth
Fashioned and welded.

It had a might mine eyes had never seen, —
A mien, a stature,
As if the centuries that rolled between
Had greatened Nature.

It breathed, it moved ; above Jove's classic sway
A place was won it :
The rustic sculptor motioned ; then " To-day "
He wrote upon it.

" What man art thou ? " I cried, " and what this
wrong
That thou hast wrought me ?
My marbles lived on symmetry and song :
Why hast thou brought me

A form of all necessities, that asks
Nurture and feeding ?
Not this the burthen of my maidhood's tasks,
Nor my high breeding."

" Behold," he said, " Life's great impersonate,
Nourished by labor !
Thy gods are gone with old-time faith and fate ;
Here is thy Neighbor."

THE GOOD GUALDERALDA

By Arno, on the Tuscan side,
The matchless Gualderalda grew,
Where many a farm and meadow wide
Her father's domination knew.

He moved in dark and sullen strength ;
She grew, a lovely flower apart,
With virtues cloistered in her soul,
Like leaflets at the lily's heart.

And now great news the castle stirs :
The King, in hunting, takes this way,
And of your hospitable walls
Will ask his welcome for a day.

“ Sir Count, the world accords your house
A daughter marvellously fair :
If I accept your loyal vows,
To see her face shall be my prayer.”

Then from her turret near the sky
Came she in blushing maidenhood ;

Then first unveiled before the eye
Of eager admiration stood.

“Sire, you shall touch my daughter’s lips
If so your royal pleasure deign ;”
Then paled, in wan and strange eclipse,
Her beauty, with a sudden pain.

“No man shall touch my lips,” she saith,
“Save he who claims my wedded hand :
Rather will I resign my breath,
And yield my pulses where I stand.”

“How? dost thou mock me, froward girl?”
“Nay, count,” the wiser king replies,
“Thou wert a worse than peasant churl
Such unflecked virtue to despise.

“Go, Gualderalda, fair indeed !
I’ll wed thee proudly in the land :
The noblest knight that crosses steed
Shall claim thy dowry at my hand.”

Men note not where her bones repose
In some old crypt, forgotten long ;
But Dante keeps her virgin rose
Bright in the chaplet of his song.

THE TEA-PARTY

I AM not with you, sisters, in your talk ;
I sit not in your fancied judgment-seat :
Not thus the sages in their council walk,
Not in this wise the calm great spirits meet.

My life has striven for broader scope than yours ;
The daring of its failure and its fact
Have taught how deadly difficult it is
To suit the high endeavor with the act.

I do not reel my satire by the yard,
To flout the fronts of honorable men ;
Nor, with poor cunning, underprize the heart
Whose impulse is not open to my ken.

Ah ? sisters, but your forward speech comes well
To help the woman's standard, new-unfurled :
In carpet council ye may win the day ;
But keep your limits, — do not rule the world.

What strife should come, what discord rule the
times,
Could but your pettish will assert its way !

No lengthened wars of reason, but a rage,
Shown and repented twenty times a day.

Ye're all my betters, — one in beauty more,
And one in sharpness of the wit and tongue,
And one in trim, decorous piety,
And one with arts and graces ever young.

But well I thank my father's sober house
Where shallow judgment had no leave to be,
And hurrying years, that, stripping much beside,
Turned as they fled, and left me charity.

WARNING

POWER, reft of aspiration ;
Passion, lacking inspiration ;
Leisure, not of contemplation.

Thus shall danger overcome thee,
Fretted luxury consume thee,
All divineness vanish from thee.

Be a man, and be one wholly ;
Keep one great love, purely, solely,
Till it make thy nature holy ;

That thy way be paved in whiteness,
That thy heart may beat in lightness,
That thy being end in brightness.

A VISION OF PALM SUNDAY

IF I were a titled princess, this blessed Palm-Sun-
day morn,
I'd not sit in this little carriage, with varnish and
paint forlorn ;
Nor wear this old cloak and bonnet, kept carefully
for the day :
There should be no best in my wardrobe ; I'd go
in best things alway.

And this Yankee should never drive me, this saucy
son of the whip,
Who sits in a cart on week-days, a leather belt on
his hip ;
Nor this small horse of smaller breeding, that starts
at each foolish fright :
I'd borrow the Sun's proud coursers, and sweep
through the streets like light.

This dust should not trouble my vision, nor smart
in my tingling breast ;
With dewy drops rosy scattered, the air itself should
be blest ;

And these people that stare so wanly from their
 windows empty of sky
Should glow like a sun-touched landscape with the
 joy of my riding by.

For you see, I myself should bless them ; no com-
 mittee should scan their need :
I'd visit their doleful dwellings, my help should be
 help indeed ;
I'd bring them to true heart-wishes, not only to
 clothes and bread ;
I'd pull down these toppling houses, and build
 pretty cots instead.

And this were my April fooling, when they came
 from this morning's church, —
In vain for their rags and cobwebs, and joyless
 beds, should they search :
All waving with snowy curtains their newly stained
 walls should be ;
And their scores paid up at all dealers, such help
 should they claim from me.

And these little ones bare and ragged, that play
 with the Sunday's palms,
They should answer with wide-mouthed wonder,
 I'd give them such golden alms ;
And these crying babies some angel should touch
 with a waving bough,

Till they smiled on their mothers' bosoms, where
they hang so heavily now.

But not such poor cheap-bought comforts, not
blessings that come for pelf, —

The dearest and costliest blessing, I'd carry it in
myself.

My smile should be meed for heroes, my lips draw
such tender breath

That a little strain of my music should comfort the
pangs of death.

Such a heart I'd bear in my bosom, that, threading
the crowded streets,

My face should shed joy unlooked for on every
poor soul one meets ;

And such wisdom should crown my forehead, that,
coming where counsels stand,

I should carry the thoughts of justice, and 'stablish
the weal of the land.

The servants that waited on me should so prize the
gracious task,

No wage-gold should bring or bind them, my pre-
sence were all to ask ;

And they who should leave my service, with sor-
rowful feet and slow

Out-lengthening a dear remembrance, from my
sight and sound should go.

102 A VISION OF PALM SUNDAY

For a church I'd have such a temple as wonders
the world in Rome,
With a thousand sunny corners where angels might
make their home :
I'd not have the prayers in Latin, and the doctrine
far out of reach,
But the homely to help the humble, like the Fisher
of old should preach.

For myself I would keep no gewgaws, no trumpery
cloth of gold,
No stick of a Stick in Waiting for gaping fools to
behold :
Friends should gather where'er I wandered, hearts
should build me a blood-red throne ;
'Tis with loving the world and with blessing I'd
win it to be my own.

Yet I'd keep the rich guerdon of beauty, and youth
should but mellow down
To a fuller, maturer feeling, that knowledge and
duties crown ;
And the tireless flow of spirits, with the sober de-
light of art,
And some subtle, saintly secret, to hold from the
world apart.

If thy wealth be loving and giving, the good God is
over all

To bless the world with thy blessing, — no prayer
doth unheeded fall.

Gather back thy joys in thy bosom this blessed
Palm-Sunday morn,

For we have the grace that we ask for ; thou 'rt
better than princess born.

BABY'S SHOES

"And it came to pass, that as we ascended the stair, at bedtime, we encountered the baby's shoes, which the mother kissed, and put in her bosom."

LITTLE feet, pretty feet,
Feet of fairy Maud,
Fair and fleet, trim and neat,
Carry her abroad !

Be as wings, tiny things,
To my butterfly :
In the flowers, hours on hours,
Let my darling lie.

Shine ye must, in the dust,
Twinkle as she runs,
Threading a necklace gay
Through the summer suns.

Stringing days, borrowing phrase,
Weaving wondrous plots,
With her eyes blue and wise
As forget-me-nots.

Like a charm which doth arm
Some poor mother's pain
For the child dream-beguiled
She shall know again,

By the pet amulet
Kept through lonely years ;
Little shoe, I and you
Would not part for tears.

Cinderel grown a belle,
Coming from her ball,
Frightened much, let just such
A tiny slipper fall.

If men knew as I do
Half thy sweets, my own,
They 'd not delay another day, —
I should be alone.

Come and go, friend and foe,
Fairy Prince most fine !
Take your gear elsewhere ;
Maud is only mine.

“SERVANT TO A WOODEN CRADLE”

COME, visit the flowers, thy cousins,
God's dear little lamb, and mine !
See where, lit by one flaming crystal,
The gems of the greenhouse shine !
The leaves of this rose thou shalt scatter
With the strength of thine infant will :
Thou hast ravished the form of the flower,
See ! the heart keeps its sweetness still.

The flowers have a dark, sad mother,
Whose bosom is bare to view ;
So they haste, in their springtide beauty,
To clothe her worn heart anew.
They perish ; but she endureth,
To faint in the Winter's scorn,
With a life-warmth buried within her
Through which other Springs are born.

As the shadows dance hither and thither,
The gleams of thy consciousness pass,
As a lamp wakes its fitful glimmer
In the heart of a sleeping glass.

The shrouded ghost of the future
Stands near, while I hold thee fast ;
And the traits of my race turn slowly
My thoughts to the long-linked past.

O Future ! what sorrows gather
In the folds of thy hanging veil ?
O Past, shalt thou flower further
In passions comprest and pale ?
O thou who art past and future,
Thou Present of life and soul !
We lift our sad eyes to thy features,
Our thoughts to thy great control.

Thy manhood lies crouching within thee,
For the leap of its coming years ;
Thy heart takes its long vibration
From the mother's fountain of tears ;
The helpful things and the hurtful
Weave round thee their waiting spell :
Oh ! look to the God that commands them,
And all shall be suffered well.

A WINTER THOUGHT

THE flower of my love is sleeping,
Locked in his icy funeral mound :
The Frost, stern sentinel, is keeping
Earth's tranced blossoms under ground.

The Spring shall bring the sweet appearing
Of buds, her radiant breath shall free ;
But my heart blossom, most endearing,
Shall rest, a flower of Memory.

A sterner sentinel is waiting
Our ban of severance to remove :
Death must resolve our separation,
Chill Herald of the Spring of Love.

SPRING-BLOSSOMS

THE little daisies, two by two,
The lilies wet with frosted dew,
The sweet procession of the Spring
Carries my baby's offering.

I leave the thoughts that take his place,
Imaginations winged in space,
And fold his shadow to my breast,
With the dear lips that mine have prest.

Ever my introverted eyes
Recover that past paradise ;
Not without hell pain shuddered through
Where life declined, to rise anew.

Oh ! to my darling carry this,
The old-time phrase, the frequent kiss ;
Remind him how, in his decay,
My life's enamel melts away.

Tell him my time must also come
To enter his restricted home,
Where my soul furniture shall be
His lovely immortality.

REMEMBRANCE

THERE was a time when thy dear face to me
Was but a dream, with nameless pangs between.
Three happy years upheld the fatal screen
Whose fall left blank and bitterness for thee.

As one who at a gracious drama sits,
And builds long vistas in its magic ways,
“ For this must come, and this ; ” and while he stays
The end consigns him to the silent streets :

So did I stand when thy sweet play was done,
Wondering what spell the curtain still should hide,
Waiting and weeping, till my saintly guide
Took by the hand, and pitying said, “ Pass on.”

So thou art hid again, and wilt not come
For any knocking at the veiled door ;
Nor mother-pangs, nor nature, can restore
The heart’s delight and blossom of thy home.

And I with others, in the outer court,
Must sadly follow the excluding will,
In painful admiration of the skill
Of God, who speaks his sweetest sentence short.

HAMLET AT THE BOSTON

WE sit before the row of evening lamps,
Each in his chair,
Forgetful of November dews and damps
And wintry air.

A little gulf of music intervenes,
A bridge of sighs,
Where still the cunning of the curtain screens
Art's paradise.

My thought transcends these viols' shrill delight,
The booming bass,
And, towards the regions we shall view to-night,
Makes hurried pace.

The painted castle, and the unneeded guard
That ready stand ;
The harmless Ghost, that walks with helm unbarred
And beckoning hand.

And beautiful as dreams of maidenhood,
That doubt defy,
Young Hamlet, with his forehead grief-subdued,
And visioning eye.

O fair dead world, that from thy grave awak'st
A little while,
And in our heart strange revolution mak'st
With thy brief smile !

O beauties vanished, fair lips magical,
Heroic braves !
O mighty hearts, that held the world in thrall !
Come from your graves !

The poet sees you through a mist of tears, —
Such depths divide
Him, with the love and passion of his years,
From you, inside !

The poet's heart attends your buskined feet,
Your lofty strains,
Till earth's rude touch dissolves that madness
sweet,
And life remains :

Life that is something while the senses heed
The spirit's call ;
Life that is nothing when our grosser need
Ingulfs it all.

And thou, young hero of this mimic scene,
In whose high breast
A genius greater than thy life hath been
Strangely comprest ! —

Wear'st thou those glories draped about thy soul
Thou dost present ?
And art thou by their feeling and control
Thus eloquent ?

'T is with no feignèd power thou bind'st our sense,
No shallow art ;
Sure, lavish Nature gave thee heritance
Of Hamlet's heart !

Thou dost control our fancies with a might
So wild, so fond,
We quarrel, passed thy circle of delight,
With things beyond ;

Returning to the pillows rough with care,
And vulgar food,
Sad from the breath of that diviner air,
That loftier mood.

And there we leave thee, in thy misty tent
Watching alone ;
While foes about thee gather imminent,
To us scarce known.

Oh, when the lights are quenched, the music hushed,
The plaudits still,
Heaven keep the fountain, whence the fair stream
gushed,
From choking ill !

Let Shakespeare's soul, that wins the world from
wrong,

For thee avail,

And not one holy maxim of his song

Before thee fail !

So get thee to thy couch as unproved

As heroes blest ;

And all good angels, trusted in and loved,

Attend thy rest !

IN MY VALLEY

FROM the hurried city fleeing,
From the dusty men and ways,
In my golden sheltered valley,
Count I yet some sunny days.

Golden, for the ripened Autumn
Kindles there its yellow blaze ;
And the fiery sunshine haunts it
Like a ghost of summer days.

Walking where the running water
Twines its silvery caprice,
Treading soft the leaf-spread carpet,
I encounter thoughts like these : —

“ Keep but heart, and healthful courage,
Keep the ship against the sea,
Thou shalt pass the dangerous quicksands
That insnare Futurity ;

“ Thou shalt live for song and story,
For the service of the pen ;
Shalt survive till children’s children
Bring thee mother-joys again.

“Thou hast many years to gather ;
And these falling years shall bring
The benignant fruits of Autumn,
Answering to the hopes of Spring.

“Passing where the shades that darkened
Grow transfigured to thy mind,
Thou shalt go with soul untroubled
To the mysteries behind ;

“Pass unmoved the silent portal
Where beatitude begins,
With an equal balance bearing
Thy misfortunes and thy sins.”

Treading soft the leaf-spread carpet,
Thus the Spirits talked with me ;
And I left my valley, musing
On their gracious prophecy.

To my fiery youth's ambition
Such a boon were scarcely dear :
“Thou shalt live to be a grandame,
Work and die, devoid of fear.”

“Now, as utmost grace it steads me,
Add but this thereto,” I said :
“On the Matron's time-worn mantle
Let the Poet's wreath be laid.”

ENDEAVOR

"WHAT hast thou for thy scattered seed,
O Sower of the plain?

Where are the many gathered sheaves
Thy hope should bring again?"

"The only record of my work
Lies in the buried grain."

"O Conqueror of a thousand fields!
In dinted armor dight,
What growths of purple amaranth
Shall crown thy brow of might?"

"Only the blossom of my life
Flung widely in the fight."

"What is the harvest of thy saints,
O God! who dost abide?
Where grow the garlands of thy chiefs
In blood and sorrow dyed?
What have thy servants for their pains?"
"This only, — to have tried."

MEDITATION

I

WHETHER the aim I keep is right,
So far removed from sense and sight,
While half the goods that mortals prize
Lie hidden from my dream-bound eyes,
And others watch with subtler skill
To please the toy-bent human will ?

For this one passions with her glance ;
And this one weaves her swift romance ;
And this in steadfast marble leaves
The passing bloom the moment gives ;
And this one mints the golden coin,
Attendant on each glad design,
And in her state well pleased doth ride
Through streets that saw the Tarquin's pride ;
While I plod cheerless after thee,
Thou unattained Philosophy.

For me no crowd admiring waits,
Nor lettered venture tempts the Fates,
Nor hangs my work on princely walls,
Nor title proud my merit calls,

Nor I and marble shall be wed
Except above my funeral bed.
Only my diagrams I know ;
And even these make greater show
Than thou, O mistress ! dost allow,
Pent inward by a silent vow.

But this I boast, — a simpler need,
That leaves untrammelled time to read
The sentence of a loftier book
Than aught that Gain and Rumor brook ;
The thrifty urging of the morn
That waits on nations newly born,
Bestowing promise more divine
Than checkered gold at day's decline ;
Faith that permits and passes growth,
Embracing God and Nature both.

The rainbow helps us from the storm ;
But skies serene are uniform.
Though colored gems be fair, the white
Doth keep the undivided light.
The garden shows its radiant prism,
The lily hides her golden chrism,
And Truth and Peace are goods sincere
That fix the source of comforts near.

MEDITATION

II

SUBLIME and poor the bards of old
Their heavenly message heard and told,
Sequestered from the human crowd,
Who heed but warnings large and loud.

Nor velvet robe the prophet had,
In homely garments bound and clad ;
Nor dainty table gave them seat
Who with the gods might take their meat.

But Jesus poorest was of all ;
Tended with oxen in the stall ;
From narrow bounds of household rule
Devising his immortal school ;
While mother's toil and father's thrift
His weighty problems did uplift ;
And this one's work, and that one's wine,
Were moulded into types divine.
The needy fishers were his friends,
Unlearned companions in his ends ;
And stripe, and shame, and felon tree
Aided his deathless victory.

So, Soul, be steadfast in thy lot,
In marble shade or rustic cot :
Permit the wealth the Fates bestow,
But in its void no pining know.

The richest human treasury,
The mine of thought, to all is free.
Let Pleasure mix her shallow drink
While twines Desert the iron link
Whose firmness, over time and space,
Transmits the virtue of the race.
Though fortunes fail, and prospects frown,
May Duty keep her matchless crown,
Nor Desolation bid depart
The glories of a guileless heart.

THE HOUSE OF REST

I WILL build a house of rest,
Square the corners every one :
At each angle on his breast
Shall a cherub take the sun ;
Rising, risen, sinking, down,
Weaving day's unequal crown.

In the chambers, light as air,
Shall responsive footsteps fall :
Brother, sister, art thou there ?
Hush ! we need not jar nor call ;
Need not turn to seek the face
Shut in rapture's hiding-place.

Heavy load and mocking care
Shall from back and bosom part ;
Thought shall reach the thrill of prayer,
Patience plan the dome of art.
None shall praise or merit claim,
Not a joy be called by name.

With a free, unmeasured tread
Shall we pace the cloisters through :
Rest, enfranchised, like the Dead ;

Rest till Love be born anew.
Weary Thought shall take his time,
Free of task-work, loosed from rhyme.

No reproof shall grieve or chill ;
Every sin doth stand confest ;
None need murmur, " This was ill : "
Therefore do they grant us rest ;
Contemplation making whole
Every ruin of the soul.

Pictures shall as softly look
As in distance shows delight ;
Slowly shall each saintly book
Turn its pages in our sight ;
Not the study's wealth confuse,
Urging zeal to pale abuse.

Children through the windows peep,
Not reproachful, though our own ;
Hushed the parent passion deep,
And the household's eager tone.
One above, divine and true,
Makes us children like to you.

Measured bread shall build us up
At the hospitable board ;
In Contentment's golden cup
Is the guileless liquor poured.

May the beggar pledge the king
In that spirit gathering.

Oh ! my house is far away ;
Yet it sometimes shuts me in.
Imperfection mars each day
While the perfect works begin.
In the house of labor best
Can I build the house of rest.

A LEAF FROM THE BRYANT CHAPLET

CELEBRATION OF BRYANT'S SEVENTIETH BIRTH-
DAY, NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 5, 1864

FRIENDS who greet the crownèd Poet, who detain
the passing year

With the love that knows no passing, I attend your
summons here.

Had ye suffered me in silence, I had thanked your
courteous grace ;

Happier yet, in rites so cordial, to have utterance
and place.

In your city rows palatial has a mansion stood
apart,

Not in aspect nor pretension, single in its saintly
heart :

When the tides of greed and traffic swept the limits
of the town,

'T was a citadel of virtue, and a shrine of pure re-
nown.

There the Muse that knew Anacreon, that made
Roman Horace great,
Shunning Cæsar's jewelled favors, at the modest
fireside sate,
Lit the wintry coals with splendor, turned the deep
historic page,
Held the burning lamp of Fancy to the problems
of the age.

When the great ideas came singly to the crowded
market-place,
Looking wanly for a welcome in each money-get-
ting face,
And the high police of fashion urged the vagrants
to give room,
They, our Chief of song encountering, grew speedily
at home.

He had many a measure for us : at his forge he
wrought twofold,
On the iron shield of Freedom, and the poet's links
of gold.
All the while a song was singing, others better
knew than he ;
For the even stanzas of his life made subtlest
melody.

He was a veteran leader ere his forehead gained
its snows ;

And still before the pilgrim flock his silver summons goes.

No wild and desert waste he brings, with lurid day and night,

But pastures of serenity, and founts of clear delight.

We have journeyed far to praise him ; let us also praise the hour

For the travail throes of Conscience, and the newest birth of power ;

Let us praise the faultless victims, and the living, who have bent

O'er the wealth of nature ravished, with a terrible consent.

For Sorrow from the city to the martial camp has fled,

To hunt, with her funereal torch, the features of the dead.

Another and another son the sheaf of Fate doth bind,

But nothing of the thoughts of God, or hope of human kind.

Resurrection in the valley ! resurrection on the shore !

When great Justice is established, we shall have our own once more ;

Not like us, unfixed, inconstant in our issues great
and small,
But a phalanx set in marble for the future's judgment call.

Long remain the noble Poet, priceless hostage of
our love !
Vainly floats the wingèd message from the banquet
halls of Jove,
Vainly voices from Valhalla name the champion of
the free :
He has pæans yet to utter, he must crown our victory.

When the moment comes to claim him that must
come to claim us all,
Hearts that cherish human longings will be dark-
ened by his fall ;
But immortal Truth shall welcome her adorer to her
breast,
Saying, " Things are changed between us now. On
earth I was thy guest." .

“SAVE THE OLD SOUTH!”

Two hands the God of Nature gave,
One swift to smite, one fond to save,
Betwixt the cradle and the grave.

Where Strength hews out his stony stent,
Where woods are felled and metals blent,
The right hand measures his content.

Where Skill sits tireless at her loom,
Where beauty wafts her transient bloom,
The tender saving hand has room.

And Fate, as in a tourney fine,
The differing powers does match and join,
That each may wear the crown divine.

But manhood in its zeal and haste
Leaves cruel overthrow and waste
Upon its pathway, roughly traced.

Then woman comes with patient hand,
With loving heart of high command,
To save the councils of the land.

Round this old church so poor to see,
Record of years that swiftly flee,
She draws the chain of sympathy.

The men who make their gold their weal,
Who guard with powder and with steel,
Have not a weapon she can feel.

Before the venerable pile,
Armed with a reason and a smile,
She stations with benignant wile.

Like Barbara Frietchie in her day,
She has a royal will to say :
" You shall not tear one stone away."

You disavow the spirit need
That avarice may build with heed
The gilded monuments of greed.

What hope, what help can patriots know ?
Only this counter mandate slow,
" The mothers will not have it so."

Mothers ! the wrongs of ages wait !
Amend them, ministers of fate !
Redeem the church, reform the state !

A SPRING THOUGHT

OVERGROW my grave,
Kindly grass ;
Do not wave
To those who pass
A single mournful thought
Of affection come to nought.

Look up to the blue
Where, light-hid,
Lives what doth renew
Man's chrysalid.
Say not : She is here,
Say not : She was there.
Say : She lives in God,
Reigning everywhere.

IN COLOGNE CATHEDRAL

I FELT the glories of the ancient shrine
Wrap me about with harmonies divine.
The childlike faith, the earnest sacrifice,
The inspiration of the truly wise.

Here musing souls for centuries have prayed,
Here hath man's bleeding heart atonement made.
What throngs devout, what aspirations vast
People the dreamy regions of the Past !

But now the splendors of the later thought
Break on my dream, deliverance dearly bought
By martyr spirits that could waste and burn
With pangs enforced, our liberties to earn.

Above the mass-bell the clear sentence rings,
Above the incense soar the angels' wings ;
And for the mystic sentence, hid in light,
I see uprise the prophet's brow of might,
Chiding us human children from our toys,
Meting our tasks out with unflinching voice.
O holy Past ! O Future, dear to me !
I stand between in God's eternity.

THE BROWN SHEAVES OF THE BEL- GIAN HARVEST

FAIR sere sisters, in your girth
Rests the sweetness of the earth.
In decorous rows ye stand,
With the riches of the land.

Summer flowers unfold and die
While, without complaint or sigh
Ye endure the sun's warm eye.

Russet Nuns, these meadows fair
Measured for your cloister are.
You are cumbered by no vows,
Shut within no sterile house,
This your lovely task assigned,
To refresh all human kind.
Rustic hearts at break of day
From your lines their matins say,
And, when hours of work decline,
Nod to you their vespers fine.

In the freedom of the fields
Blazon your ancestral shields,

And your mystical device
Dates from oldest paradise.
Silver cloudlets, globe of *or*,
Azure field, forevermore,
Gules of sunset, verging on
To the Night's ensabled tone.

Not alone to offer bread
Was your ministration sped,
But to nerve man's arm to toil,
Bringing treasure from the soil,
Building peace for mate and child,
Better than the huntsman wild.
Showing how Life's fountain springs
From the lowliest of things,
From the nurture of the sod
Soul that sees the face of God.

IN ROME

1877

A POPE was buried, a Pope is made,
Scarce out of hearing, a king lies dead.
The world is full of wonder and noise,
The world is full of doubting and choice.
And Faith and Freedom, the two God gave
In one blest birth, to help and save,
Threaten each other from either grave.

But here in the broad street lying before
The ancient columns that watch my door,
The diggers have brought a form to light,
A vestal, clad in her garments white,
A figure of energy and bloom
Carved on the slab of an ancient tomb,
Mocking the ashes that lay in earth
With the vanished beauty and stolen worth.

Busy people who pass this way,
Lessen their hurry and delay
To look on the calm that from ages past
Leaves its sweet record in marble massed.
To me a hope arose from the pit,
As when Israel's future was hid in it.

And in this chaos of fight and feud,
With the murderous battle-interlude,
And the minds of men so ill-combined
Against the foes of our human-kind —
It seemed that the diggers of reasons deep
Might rouse a form from her silent sleep,
And Truth, the vestal crowned with flame,
Truth, the name beyond every name,
Wearing her solemn, sweet aspèct,
Ev'n though with earth stains marred and flecked,
Might stay the headlong and calm the strife
With the inner spell of her spirit life,
Match the loud pæan with holy psalm,
And heal all wounds with eternal calm.

NEAR AMALFI

HURRY, hurry, little town,
With thy labor up and down.
Clang the forge and roll the wheels,
Spring the shuttle, twirl the reels.

Hunger comes.

Every woman with her hand
Shares the labor of the land ;
Every child the burthen bears
And the soil of labor wears.

Hunger comes.

In the shops are wine and oil
For the scanty house of toil ;
Give just measure, housewife grave,
Thrifty shouldst thou be and brave.

Hunger comes.

Only here the blind man lags,
Here the cripple clothed with rags.
Such a motley Lazarus
Shakes his piteous cap at us.

Hunger comes.

Oh ! could Jesus pass this way
Ye should have no need to pray.
He would go on foot to see
All your depths of misery.
Succor comes.

He would smooth the frowzled hair,
He would lay your ulcers bare,
He would heal as only can
Soul of God in heart of man.
Jesu comes.

Ah ! my Jesus ! still thy breath
Thrills the world untouched of death,
Thy dear doctrine sheweth me
Here, God's loved humanity
Whose kingdom comes.

MICHAEL ANGELO'S TWILIGHT

THE dreamy twilight of a day far spent
Built up to noon with swift, sublime intent,
Till, where the verticed light each failure shows,
Thought made his pause, new reasons to disclose.

Oh ! had I elsewhere started, elsewhere wrought,
The high perfection were not vainly sought.
I made the daring leap, some foible sure
My course diverted, greater wit might cure.

The shadows of the waning day come on.
I mark where touched my flight its highest zone.
I see my toilsome traces high in air
Sowing their broken splendors everywhere.

The true antithesis of work and rest
I seek, oh, mystic Twilight, in thy breast.
Night hesitates to light her sheaf of stars,
And I, a pilgrim, linger at the bars.

VICTOR EMANUEL

ROME, 1877

It was a voice of woe that said :
Cease all your sports, the King is dead.
The changeful face of human-kind
Grew in an instant sorrow-blind,
Turned inward from the visual ray
That lights the images of day
To that dark plexus, most divine,
In which man's life and death entwine.

We saw him scarce two weeks ago,
Where makes the mount its circling show,
There, blithe and bowing, round he drove,
Giving and taking signs of love.

Now shall we see his mortal spoil
All sacred with anointing oil,
The waxen tapers counterfeit
The firmament in lighted state,
The royal ermine drapes the wall,
The royal emblems gathered all.
And here, above the cushioned crown,
The form, supported on the throne,

The passive hands have held their last,
The head and heart are marble cast,
And princes wait, and friars pray,
Around Death's silent holiday.

Before they seal him in the tomb,
One shout must break the Nation's gloom,
One generous word of royal cheer
Shall ring in that unburied ear.
If aught could stir the frozen pulse,
The passive frame with life convulse,
'T would be this cry from sorrow sent,
Joy mingling with our ill-content.
The Past doth veil its gracious face,
Th' eternal Present takes its place.

Dead father, now thy child will swear
To keep thy charge with fostering care.
Thy battles he shall crown with peace,
With him the latest strife shall cease,
And black and white shall blended be,
Before his radiant majesty.
So, while within the chapel's air
Reign silent Grief and ghostly prayer,
Without, let jocund trumpets ring,
The King is dead — long live the King!

DEDICATORY POEM

FOR THE KINDERGARTEN FOR THE BLIND

NATURE

NATURE, from wintry sleep awake,
Her icy armor doth forsake ;
As her swift currents start again,
The Easter anthems sound amen ;
And lilies, white as angel's wing,
Herald the beauty of the spring.

Now Spring should make all creatures glad,
With promise she has ever had,
With message, told in perfumed breath,
Of resurrection conquering death ;
But her delights of form and hue
Our sightless children never knew.

Only with wondering thought they hear
Rehearsed the glories of the year,
And dimly seek their doubtful way
Untutored by the smile of day ;
While we, the prodigals of light,
Grow careless of the boon of sight.

Dread fate, in solitude to sit,
Unconscious of the clouds that flit
Beholding ne'er the rose of dawn,
Nor sunset's varied hues withdrawn,
Nor stars with which, above, around,
The majesty of night is crowned.

But Heaven, that sees this painful doom,
Has still some flower of choicest bloom,
Has still some gem of priceless worth
For these inheritors of earth.

For them may Wisdom spread her page,
Bequeathing wealth from age to age ;
To them make known, in time and place,
The great exemplars of our race.
Its heroes shall their courage raise ;
Its saints inspire their prayer and praise ;
Its music join their happy bands ;
Its skill instruct their tender hands.

We plant this field, to God most dear,
In the sweet spring of childhood's year ;
Aid us, good neighbors, in our need,
To sow it with immortal seed.

We do not know, we cannot guess,
What harvesting of blessedness,
Of docile heart and thoughtful mind,
Good husbandry may reap and bind ;

But well we deem that in the height
Where governs the supernal light,
Joy shall reward the service wrought,
Pay tenfold back the tribute brought,
And with our sheaves your names shall be
Bound in God's golden granary.

THE LAST SUNDAY OF OCTOBER

I AM rich in my pond and its willows ;
I am rich in my crimson trees ;
In the autumn's golden coinage
Which falls with the stirring breeze.

In the sky's soft brow of azure,
Where every morning's rays
Make merciful erasure
Of the frown of darkest days.

I am rich in the winds whose cadence
So solemnly doth blow,
As the hours in still procession
Towards the noon's high mass do go.

So I thought, this Sunday morning,
As I walked and mused alone ;
Seeking to enter God's temple,
And finding it, not in stone.

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

IN Heaven, methinks, there rings the chime
Of golden weddings all the time.
There Faith and dear Experience meet,
There Youth retains its fancy fleet,
While no sad frailty brings divorce
'Twixt purpose high and helpful force.

There in God's keeping we shall find
The generations left behind :
There, in our turn, shall we await
Our own Descendants' furthest fate,
Fed all at one ancestral board,
All, children of one loving Lord.

SELF-COMMUNINGS

I READ a record poor and mean,
From which Time lifts the glittering screen :
Evil pursued, good left undone,
From break of dawn to set of sun.
What shall the judgment Angel write ?
 Lord, let thy hammer smite !

My soul hath ta'en her easy seat
On many a monstrous false conceit,
With flimsy sceptre, bubble-blown ;
Mankind should worship at her throne.
What shall the true King's sentence write ?
 Quick, let the hammer smite !

Oh ! garish hunt of worldly joys !
Thy gilded bugles make brave noise,
But when the gay pursuit is crowned,
The laughing fiend alone is found.
 Lord, let thy hammer smite !

But, Lord, this sinner was not I :
With thee my soul's aspirings lie ;
Dispel thou the fantastic dream,
Take back the vapor to the stream !
 Lord, with thy sunlight smite !

RUBIES IN THE WATCH

THE costliest gem of the mine
That in diadems royal doth shine
Sometimes takes its place with the spring
Of a common mechanical thing,
Of a thing that the humblest may use,
The proudest be sorry to lose.

If the poems that I try to indite
Do not come into honor and light,
Are not set in the century's crown
Of the glorious things written down,

Yet may they be helpful to hold
Some heart in its casing of gold,
And mark how time-conquests are won
By the fine wheels that ceaselessly run,
As stars mark in blue dials of space,
The noon and the night of God's grace.

TO DEATH

KNOCK at this lowly cottage door ;
Say to its drudge : Thy task is o'er.
Long labor hadst thou, scanty wage ;
Thy youth scarce built to shield thine age.
Thine was the boon of hard earned bread,
The slumber of the workman's bed ;
Some broken dreams, some harmless pride,
Some hopes of heaven, by few denied ;
In faith and hope and charity
As thou hast done, be done to thee.

Enter, unasked, yon lordly pile
Where flatterers cringe and varlets smile.
Go where the jewels bravest flash,
The perfumes breathe, the goblets clash.
Say to each pampered inmate : Lo !
The lapse of time doth end thy show.
Thy wealth shall fill another's hand,
A stranger in thy room shall stand.
By faith and hope and charity,
As thou hast done, be done to thee.

THE GIFTS OF THE WISE

LET me go in with the kings
To the presence of God most high.
Their girdles are full of precious things
As they royally pass me by.

Each, as he went, let fall
A jewel in my hand,
But the alms they flung were poor and small
To the boon I would command.

I lay on the stones without,
I clamored at the door ;
They 've given me gifts of nought, of nought :
The presence I covet more.

Out from the heavenly court
Came a sentence sweet and strong :
" Only to those of high report
The presence doth belong.

" And one did give thee a heart
For the bauble in thy breast,
That might in holy life take part
With impulse pure and blest.

“ And one did give thee an eye
In the universe to see
The laws that it was fashioned by,
And how they all agree.

“ And one did give thee an ear
For doctrine lofty and deep
Of how man's spirit without fear
May pass from the mortal sleep.

“ When each surpassing boon
Thou takest as it was given,
In their fit use thou 'lt find full soon
The master-key of heaven.”

ON THE DEATH OF A GRANDCHILD

I

BEFORE the azure gate of heaven
An infant doth appear ;
The golden hinges softly turn
T' admit the pilgrim dear.

Oh ! pretty one, what hast thou done
To earn repose so soon ?
“ Unto my parents dear I sang
My little lisping rune.”

How cam'st thou hither, Babe beloved ?
Thy feet were not so strong
That thou couldst cross thy nursery floor ;
“ My journey was not long ! ”

“ The morning Star was given to be
The planet of my birth ;
And, as it flitted from the sky,
I flitted from the earth.”

II

Baby Maud doth beckon me
That I cross the frozen sea ;

“Grandame, ’t is a journey light
As to take your sleep at night.”

Little Babe had little load ;
Not a life-time ill-bestowed,
Not contrition deep and drear,
Shadowy doubt, or fitful fear.

The deceitful ice might crack
’Neath the weight upon my back ;
But when I must cross that sea,
Baby Maud shall comfort me.

III

Our Baby holds her little court
Where pretty things do make her sport ;
The buds that open not, nor fall,
Are stationed in her silent hall ;
The gracious Dove, divinest held
By all the reverend souls of eld,
To her a sweet companion grows,
Whitening above the whitest rose.

The lily crown shall never fade
That on her lowly mound is laid ;
For not in vain she saw the light,
Nor, with poor errand, passed from sight,
But, in her one short year of home,
The little Babe did overcome.

AFTER HEARING COQUELIN

I PAID my gold at the theatre door,
And it almost seemed a sin
To spend the alms that might bless the poor
For the pleasure I sought within.

“And yet,” I said, “Life itself is spent
As the cost of a few delights ;
So far do its years of ill content
Outnumber its joyous sights.

The Æthiop cast her pearl in the cup ;
But I from my gold shall bring
The rainbow hues of a soul lit up
For the dark vault’s conquering.

I gave my fee, and I had my gem ;
In memory still it shines,
And Art’s immortal diadem
Its varying charm enshrines.

But now my thoughts are almost sad,
And still a boon they crave,
A fitting gift for the joy I had,
Returning, as he gave.

AT HOME

My study is bestrewed with wreck,
Things of past days, in use no more ;
When treasures now my walls should deck,
I view my relics o'er and o'er,
And fear to cast the form away
Which held my idol for a day.

Most like the room wherein I move,
My heart is full of broken toys,
Of symbols once akin to love,
Of outgrown faiths, and outlived joys.
Oh ! Thou to whom all space is near,
Make room for thy new giving here !

A THOUGHT FOR WASHING DAY

THE clothes-line is a Rosary
Of household help and care ;
Each little saint the Mother loves
Is represented there.

And when across her garden plot
She walks, with thoughtful heed,
I should not wonder if she told
Each garment for a bead.

For Celia's scarlet stockings hang
Beside Amelia's skirt,
And Bilbo's breeches, which of late
Were sadly smeared with dirt.

Von kerchief small wiped bitter tears
For ill-success at school ;
This pinafore was torn in strife
'Twixt Fred and little Jule.

And that device of finer web,
And over-costly lace,
Adorned our Eldest when she danced
At some gay fashion place.

A THOUGHT FOR WASHING DAY 157

A stranger passing, I salute
The Household in its wear,
And smile to think how near of kin
Are love and toil and prayer.

OVER THE KNEADING-TROUGH

THE Saviour said his word of truth
Was like a leaven fine
That made the bread of common life
To match the spirit-wine.

From oldest time, when shepherds dwelt
In tents of hair outspread,
This art was ordered with the law
That man should live by bread.

By bread, but "not by bread alone"
The spirit hath its need,
And on the ministry of truth
Its growing strength must feed.

My practised hand the loaf can mould,
With careful touch and swift,
While my thoughts seek what Faith can bring
From Life's surpassing gift.

FROM THE WINDOW

CURSE me that hand-organ man !

How he spoils his airs
With mechanic grinding,
As bigots spoil their prayers.

In my crimson parlor
Beethoven shall reign ;
Handel, Mozart, Wagner ;
Mongrels I disdain.

.

See the merry hackmen
Dancing in the cold,
And the beggar swaying
To the rhythm trolled.

And as I go creeping
On this icy way,
Winter seems to hearken
To the song of May.

The music of the streets is kin
To God's own harmony ;
So, bless me that hand-organ man,
And give him double fee !

THE LADDER OF PRAYER

THE mystical ladder of Prayer
Is set for our use everywhere.
Our thoughts, weary angels, ascend,
To seek our Omnipotent Friend,
While His messengers, radiant with light,
Bring Heaven itself to our sight.

ON HEARING ONE COMPLAIN

“ THERE IS NO ONE TO DIE AND LEAVE US
MONEY ”

LIVE, my beloved ones ! live, and make us rich
With Life's sweet treasures of humanity.
Feed not the cruel agony and itch
Of souls distraised to Luxury's sharp pitch,
But let us earn our modest joys, and be
Richer in service than its moneyed fee.

QUATRAIN

IN PRAISE OF E. P. P.¹

WHAT shall we give to thee, O princely heart,
That nothing for thyself dost seek apart ?
God in that liberal vein enriched thee so
That little 's left for Friendship to bestow.

¹ Elizabeth Palmer Peabody.

SUPPLIANTS

“WHAT right hast thou to knock at my door?”

Dear Lord, a beggar did knock before,
And a woman weighted with deadly sin
Just called on your name and so passed in.

“What he wanted the beggar knew ;
His rags were real, and his hunger true.
You have clothes to cover you, food to live,
What do you need that I needs must give ?

“The Woman fled from the touch of shame,
No credit shielded her blasted name ;
But thou art quoted as rich and gay
By those who are both, so I say thee nay.”

Ah Lord ! the beggar faints not for food
As I for the truth of thy kingdom good,
Nor hath the wretch from the streets appealed
More nearly than I for thy mercy's shield.

Great need of Humanity ! Hunger divine !
God's fatherhood, feed thou this spirit of mine !
And in the self-judgment which me doth abase,
With the poor and the sinful, let me see thy face.

MIDDLE AGE

LEFT alone with the cows to-day,
The younger members all gone away ;
The trees would go, but their roots are set,
Their patent of freedom not made out yet.
So here I sit, in state serene,
Every one's servant and no one's queen,
Watching the butterflies bright and brown,
That float like leaves from God's autumn crown.

My children are chasing the swift delight
Oft neared, but ne'er o'ertaken quite :
The sweet cup fails from the lips too soon,
The harmony waits for its perfect tune ;
In bluest ether some scutcheon dark
Heralds the storm-fiend to the bark ;
God's monitors set, if the sense should pall,
To whisper the spirit : " This is not all."

The grave of the Past in my garden lies
For daily and hourly sacrifice.
The Christ life blesses my daily care,
For his is the lesson and his the prayer.
But the endless Future touches me too
In the unseen Babe that, old and new,

Is carried along in the household ways
With its waiting mother, too dear for praise.

I look at the ancient blue on high
That saw the first Parents live and die,
By this very sun which, burning still,
Mirrors God's patient and constant will.
And I look below at the ancient green
Where the life of the æons has garnered been ;
There, standing where others stand between,
I study the lesson of human fate
On the wondrous page, at my narrow date.

And this later freedom, this thoughtful calm
That sobers the strophe and quickens the psalm,
That gathers the blessing and loses the pain,
And counts nought for lost in the final gain,
And the children, born without pangs of mine,
And the dreams that in young eyes dazzle and
shine,

And the faith that follows the prophet's soul
Where truth unseen has its distant goal.
Let me end the song ere I turn the page, —
All this is the burthen of middle age.

LENT

IN remembrance of me,
When the days come round,
Leave your jollity,
Pleasures of sight and sound !

Take your burthensome sins
To the desert of thought ;
Think how one who was bound
Man's deliverance wrought.

Think how one who was shamed,
Hanging upon the tree,
Shows the glory of God
To humanity.

He was lowly and poor,
Never a roof did own ;
High o'er the starry floor
Shineth his sapphire throne.

All the spirits of light
Gather to do him weal :
Hail thou, mighty to help !
Hail thou, gracious to heal !

Hail thou, tasting alone
 Bitterest cup of death :
Hail thou, Conqueror grown,
 Jesus of Nazareth !

A SHADOW IN THE CHRISTMAS LIGHT

DECEMBER 25, 1892

THE Christmas-tide was at its height,
And in the hall a joyous throng,
Their faces radiant with delight,
Waited for Handel's master song.

The comfort that the seer foretold,
The message by the angels brought,
The shepherds watching by their fold,
The Babe, of Orient pilgrims sought.

And thence, the scaffolding of Faith,
That builds her way to very Heaven,
The triumph over sin and Death,
The eternal promise sealed and given.

And "Lord of Lords" and "King of Kings,"
The chorus thundered in its might ;
The ransom of created things,
The crown of victory and light.

In all that music glad and loud,
A secret sentence came to me ;
Amid the plaudits of the crowd
It only whispered " Calvary."

Then from the ecstasy of sound
My spirit fled, in dark divorce,
To where a victim, stretched and bound,
Hung in the iron grasp of force.

In the gloom-gathering eventide,
Dank with its dews upon his head,
With bleeding hands and piercèd side,
The Christ of whom they sing is dead.

Oh ! for one moment of the power
To taste that deep abysmal cup,
Serenely, in that fatal hour
To drink its bitter blackness up.

Commend me to that breaking heart
Which still its cry could Godward lift ;
Let me rehearse the humblest part
In that immortal, sinless shrift !

The world doth oft its tyrants praise,
Crowns them with splendor and with song,
Unworthy brows still wear the bays
That to earth's heroes should belong.

But when to help our human need
This witness met the death abhorred,
Content to agonize and bleed,
Then was he King, then was he Lord !

The Earth is promised to the meek,
The pure in heart their God shall see ;
But when Life's boon supreme I seek,
Lend me thy glory, Calvary.

HENRY WARD BEECHER

PREACHER, POET, PHILANTHROPIST

LIKE a fountain that upsprings
In a desert wild and drear,
Like a clarion note that rings
Through the fastnesses of fear ;

Like a fortress on a rock,
Set to guard a wide domain,
Sheltering the affrighted flock
When destruction sweeps the plain ;

Like a storm whose grandeur wild
Takes its way at heaven's behest ;
Like a Samson undefiled,
To untruth a fatal guest ;

Thus, with thoughts that flame and soar,
Thus, with spirit weaponed hand,
For dear peace and righteous war,
Stood our preacher in the land.

Gracious nature, graceful art,
Wove for him their blended crown ;

He could bless with brimming heart,
He could call God's thunder down.

Bitter woes of humankind !
Sin and sorrow, grief and wrong,
Was he to your beckoning blind ?
Did he slight you in his song ?

And the mystic things of God
That we dimly apprehend,
Did he tread them, roughly shod,
Shatter beauties without end ?

No, those treasures dearly bought
Are beyond the reach of fate ;
They are builded in our thought,
They are welded in our state.

On the solemn judgment mount
He methinks may fearless stand,
For the final, dread account,
With his record in his hand.

A great army would attest
The true succor that he gave
To the poor God loveth best,
To the woman, to the slave !

He once more may fitly pray
If a prayer can sound in heaven :

“ Be God’s help to me this day,
As the help that I have given.”

I remember well the thrill
Multitudes were glad to share
When the solemn aisles did fill
With the music of his prayer ;

With his sermon wisely planned,
Reasoned with a master’s might ;
Faith’s illuminating hand
Touched its sentences with light.

That we had him is a boon
That commands a song of praise ;
That we lose him oversoon
Is a grief for all our days.

WHAT I SAW FROM MY WINDOW

NEWPORT, 1890

THE telegraph pole is a mast,
And the cloud is a misty sail ;
And yon great gold star is the lantern fast
That tempests cannot pale.

Oh ! where does the dream-ship drift,
With my cherished dead on board ?
Yon close-shut heaven reveals no rift
Of that country unexplored.

But surely on their way
Does Faith, like a lantern, shine,
And blue seas of God's providence
Bear up their bark and mine.

IN THE GREAT JUNE HEAT

1891

God send sweet airs to those who dig
The ground, this warm June day !
Their straining sinews serve his law,
While here for them I pray.
This haughty personage whose thoughts
Aspire to God on high,
Has in the lowly fields its root,
And lives by husbandry.

Man doth not live by bread alone ;
Sure husbandmen may know
The height of human destiny,
The depth of human woe.
The hind hath need of nurture good,
Of dignity and power,
Of lessons that his tasks reveal,
The harvest and the flower.

Dear Mother Earth, whose alchemy
Turns Death to Life again,
And from his whispered secrets brings
Spring's beautiful refrain,

Reflect for them God's providence,
And while they serve our need,
May Faith's unmoneyed recompense
Their spirit hunger feed !

NIGHT IN THE TROPICS

THE heavens are hung with gems so bright,
Sure this must be a gala night
To which the wingèd clouds invite.

Each fleecy messenger doth fly
Hunting his angel thro' the sky,
Averring : Sent for thee am I.

But now the moon in silver sheen
Looks listless o'er the velvet screen
She soon shall overtop serene ;

Like some great lady, coming late,
Whose glory must complete the state
For which the strings and dancers wait.

Nor must the eye be fed alone ;
The ear attests in undertone
The music of the sea beach lone.

And now the stars are out of sight
The moon doth set, with sovereign right
Her beauty in a dome of light.

Oh ! feast of silence and of thought,
Oh ! restful night, of labor wrought,
Oh ! crown of all, God's over thought.

SAMANA, May 4.

THE SPIRIT OF THE FLOWERS

THE Lily praises God with open heart,
The Rose in perfumed chambers prays apart.

The Tulip flashes like a trumpet's blare
Love's blood-red banner answering Love's prayer.

Crocus and Daisy their snug secrets keep,
Of the spring wakening and the winter sleep :

While lowly Grass and Dandelion lay
Their green and gold to deck the King's highway.

AT TWILIGHT

FROM my small store of learning must I feed
Such as my simple counsel ask and heed.

I sit beside the crimson bier of Day,
Whose hours with my endeavors flow away.

Oh ! Source of wisdom, back to thee I call,
From thought whose shallows and whose depths
appal.

Here, in this outspread parchment of the skies,
Let some bright sentence fix my wandering eyes !

Then in the heav'n above me, lo ! afar,
God lit the candle of the Evening Star.

CHRISTMAS VOICES

THE MANY

TH' o'er-mastered voice of Nature speaks ;
Th' o'er-burthened Earth her ransom seeks.
Low cringing at the Despot's stool,
Mankind aspires to higher rule.
The multitudes with bitter cry
Lift their despairing hands on high,
Praying for succor from afar —
The token of an answering star.

.

“ Sure, on the gloom in which we dwell
In ages past, some lustre fell.
Some agency without a name
Touched our rude sense with quickening flame ;
Some voice divine, some promise fair
Moved us to worship and to prayer.
But now our oracles are still,
Our altars desolate and chill ;
Oh ! could that better light return —
That beacon-fire before us burn !
Could some bright message from the sky
The power reveal that rules on high ! ”

THE THREE

FROM Orient's spicy groves we come ;
Beyond the desert lies our home
Where, grand with jewels and with gold,
Our haughty kings their sceptres hold.

We journey far, and not of choice,
In answer to a warning voice :
"Forsake the purple gates of morn,
Westward the world's true King is born."
Him should our thoughts more fitly deem
Cradled in groves of Academe,
Or where the circling chariots speed
And bards rehearse the victor's meed :
Or nursed at Egypt's awful shrine
Where wells the wondrous flood divine.
But 'mid the stars our guiding light
Hither doth lead — by day and night ;
We follow with unwearied feet,
The portent of the fates to greet.

STROPHE FIRST

Give us comfort, Aphrodite, thou art fair,
Lo ! the sunbeams light the meshes of thy hair :
And thy car is drawn by doves
To the height of human loves,
While thy perfumes float, like incense, on the
air.

ANTI-STROPHE FIRST

Nay — the joys I bring are ravishing, but brief,
And my servants shun the lonely house of grief.

All my songs are tuned to pleasure,
To the dancing Lydian measure —
Not of me is born the soul-commanding chief.

STROPHE SECOND

Mother Isis, with the lotus blossom crowned,
Shall Earth's rescue in thy child beloved be found?

Wilt thou loose him from thy arms,
With his amulets and charms,
That the song of our redemption may resound?

ANTI-STROPHE SECOND

Ye unhappy ones, no succor seek from me,
I am pledged to Death's unfruitful majesty.

Ever, in sepulchral state,
Must I mourn my vanished mate,
And my son alone may bear me company.

THE ONE

THEN uprose the tender wailing of a child
Which a maiden-mother, merciful and mild,
With a sudden joy caressed,
Shielded soft upon her breast,
Unto Israel's God devoted, undefiled.

“What of thee, O mother, born in lowlihood?
Are those veins of thine enriched with royal blood?
 Shall this tiny infant hand
 Give the law to every land?
Hast thou brought to light the everlasting good?”

As they listen, lo! a wondrous prophecy
Of the glorious deliverance yet to be
 With the infant's tones did blend;
 And their seeking was at end —
They had found the monarch they were fain to see.

“Whoso struggles for his life mid grief and wrong,
Let him come to me, with all who labor long;
 In my heart their woes have place
 And my love shall give them grace —
I will comfort them with saying and with song.

“I will bargain their redemption with my blood,
Heirs of Heav'n are we in holy brotherhood.
 To the ages I bequeath
 But the measure of the breath
That God breathed on me, renewing and renewed.”

ON THE MUSICAL SERVICE HELD
IN COMMEMORATION OF JAMES
RUSSELL LOWELL

FEBRUARY 22, 1891

BLOCKS of sweet sound, whose concourse seemed
to build

Arches and aisles where our Beloved might walk
Free from the touch of our familiar talk,
Rapt in the ecstasy of things revealed.

Music hath power above a grave to rear
The temple of a majesty divine ;
The outer glory, and the inner shrine,
And choir, where the immortal spirits cheer.

Within such bounds our Friend should be at home,
The monumental Past beneath his feet
While he looks upward, well content to greet,
Silent no more, the angels of the dome.

What visions brave should open to his ken,
Dante's great journeys, Angelo's just fame,
Savonarola's heart and robe of flame,
The galaxy of earth's illustrious men.

And as he looks and listens, in his breast
A fount of deep contentment is unsealed :
“ I too made answer when the Right appealed,
And sang my noblest song at Truth's behest.”

Dearer than Poet's wreath or Victor's meed
Or boons fantastical for which men pray,
The reverence and service of his day,
The championship of Freedom in her need.

What shall God grant him ? Mercy, peace, and rest,
The crown of large desert and soaring thought,
The lesson to his time and country brought,
The light unending of the ever blest.

THE CENTENNIAL OF WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT'S BIRTH ¹

THE age its latest decade shows,
The wondrous century nears its close,
Revealing in its fateful span,
Unwonted ways of good to man.

Imprisoned vapor speeds its course,
Flies, quick with life, th' electric force,
Nature's dæmonic mysteries
Are angels now that win and please.

Above the wild industrial din,
The race an hundred goals to win,
The gathered wealth, the rifled mine,
Still sounds the poet's song divine ;

And Skill that marshals myriad hands
For manhood's task in many lands,
Attunes her anvil by the lyre,
And forges with Promethean fire.

O master of imperial lays,
Crowned in the fullness of thy days,

¹ Celebrated at Cummington, Mass., November 3, 1894.

One heart that owns thy gracious spell
Thy reverend mien remembers well.

For mine it was, ere fell the snow
Upon this head of long ago,
My modest wreath to intertwine
With richer offerings at thy shrine.

A guest upon that day of days,¹
How leapt my heart to hymn thy praise !
Yea, from that hour my spirit wore
A high content unknown before.

The past engulfs these echoes fond ;
Thou and thy mates have passed beyond,
And that fair festival appears
Dim through the vista of long years.

But love still keeps his watch below,
When fades from sight the sunset glow,
And at the challenge of thy name
Stirs in each heart the loyal flame.

Still battling on the field of life,
We break from the unequal strife,
From task or pastime hasten all
As at a vanished leader's call.

¹ The celebration of Mr. Bryant's sixtieth birthday by the Century Club of New York.

Within the shadow of thy tent
We read again thy testament,
Review the treasure which thy art
Bequeathed t' enrich thy country's heart.

No gift whose precious bloom can fade,
No holocaust on false shrine laid,
A legacy of good untold,
August as oracles of old,
The winged words that cannot die,
The world-transcending prophecy.

A RHYME FOR MEMORIAL DAY

KEEP fond remembrance of thy brave,
Columbia ! twice by blood redeemed ;
Once, from thy foes beyond the wave,
And once from evil nearer outschemed.

Bring forth the banners, faded now,
Reconsecrate each stain and rent
With patriot pledge and solemn vow
To Freedom's glorious intent.

Thy champions at the call of Fate
Their pleasures and their toil forsook,
They left their firesides desolate,
But wrote their names in Honor's book.

Heap high the wreaths above their dust !
Sound the war trumpet for their meed,
But keep thee faithful to the trust
Bequeathed in each heroic deed.

Of the shorn beauty of their days
Let Memory her broad blazon make,
And point her lesson, while our lays
Call the land blessed for their sake.

The Riverside Press

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, U. S. A.

ELECTROTYPED AND PRINTED BY

H. O. HOUGHTON AND CO.

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